

***Ethnic Identity in Perspective:  
The Case of Shi'a and the State of Lebanon.***

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## *Abstract*

Using Shi'i community as a case study, the thesis explores the established theories of nationalism and ethnic identity. It elaborates on four different historical and socio-political contexts. These contexts, however changing, are not treated in isolation from one another; rather, they entail components that are maintained and recycled throughout. Along these lines, the historical context of Shi'i identity will be analysed in Part I, chapters 1-2. The first chapter deals with Shi'i religious and local identity. It explores the socio-political context of the early Islamic period, out of which the particular Shi'i religious myths and symbols were constructed. At a second stage, it contextualises on the local Shi'i identity of pre-state Lebanon. The second chapter elaborates on the changing socio-political setting of the late Ottoman period; the way it shaped Shi'i collective identity. Within the context of both chapters, what accounts for collective identity is a set of complementary and overlapping attachments: religious, local, kin, old and new. More than plain historical events, both chapters of the first part are based on the political themes of the core thesis (chapters 3-6).

The second context as presented in Part II, Chapters 3-4, is the context of state construction in Lebanon. The third chapter situates Shi'i identity within the contexts of both the Mandate and Independent Lebanon. The chapter evaluates the traditional functions of the 'state', as distributor of socio-economic rewards forging both the political representation of the citizens in state-sponsored institutions and 'founding' myths. The fourth chapter deals with Shi'i political mobilisation and the new inferences it brought on to the Shi'i collective identity. Through the lenses of Shi'i community, both these chapters of the second part explore the actual structure of the state in Lebanon, according to the traditional theories of state building. As argued in these chapters, the state of Lebanon was constructed out of a historical experience, in many ways different from the mainstream European states. Far from an internal venture, state making in Lebanon was to a great extent, externally forged. In addition, far from the central agent of authority within society, the state in Lebanon was built on the Ottoman and Mandate fragmented structure, and in between various local, family and sectarian channels of authority and identity. As the chapters argue, in contexts other than the established ones, alongside 'state', there are other entities which can perform the functions so far attached to state authority and legitimacy.



The third context evolves around state destruction and warfare in Lebanon, dealt with in part III, chapter five. This chapter deals with the establishment of Shi'i military organisations as autonomous channels of authority, replacing in a way the 'state' itself, monopolising the means of coercion, and forging new identity boundaries. Hence, the chapter argues, even within the context of warfare in Lebanon, the various militias performed the roles that in other contexts were performed by the state itself. In addition, the militias acted in similar ways as the pre-war channels of authority in Lebanon.

The fourth context is the one of state reconstruction in the aftermath of warfare in Lebanon, presented in part IV, chapter six; the final chapter deals with the historical continuity between the past and the present state of Lebanon. Consequently, all the different contexts presented in the thesis are linked together in the final part. In this part, as argued, state reconstruction in Lebanon was to a large extent different from the mainstream European historical paradigm. Nevertheless, post-war state reconstruction in Lebanon was closely attached to the pre-war structure. Thus the post-war state reproduced the same old logic: indirect channels of authority, standing in between the state and the citizens, blurred boundaries between internal and external channels of authority, as well as the same old logic of identities constructed out of this structure of authority.

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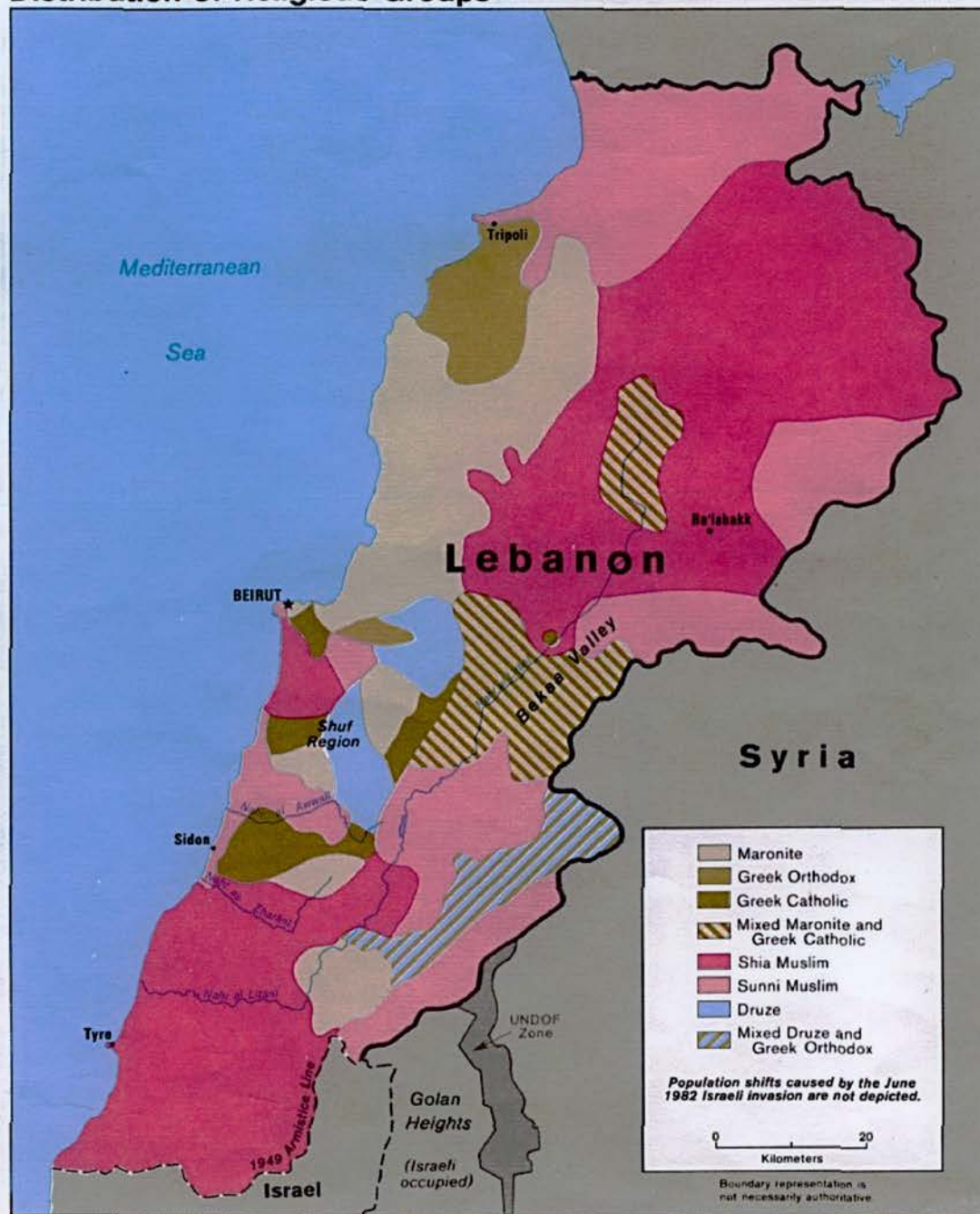
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## ***DECLARATION***

I hereby declare that this thesis was originated entirely by myself, in the Department of Politics at The University of Edinburgh.

Maria Gregou

## Distribution of Religious Groups



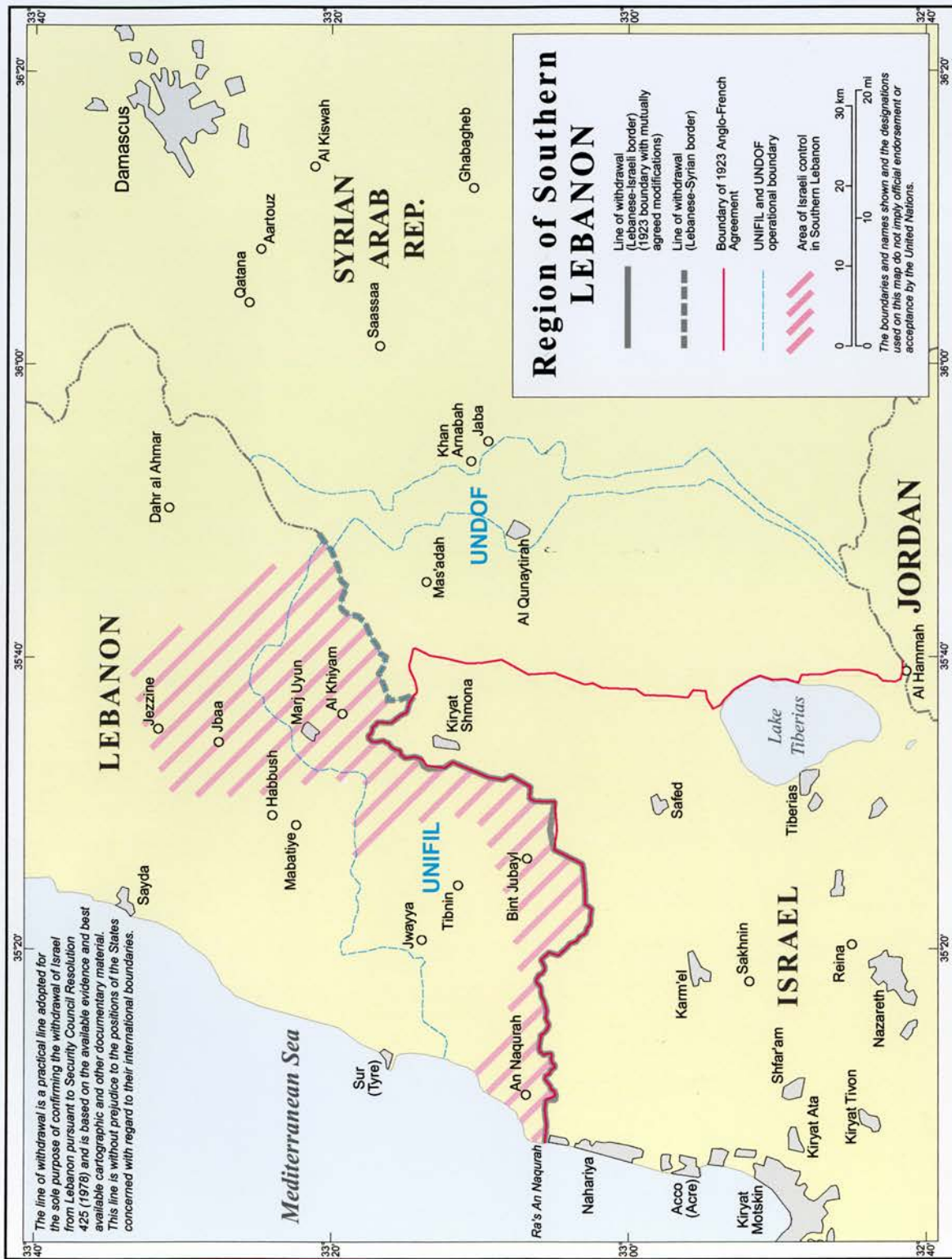
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Source: U.S. Central Intelligence Agency





Lebanon: Relief Map 2000, source: U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.



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### ***List of Abbreviations***

ALA: Arab Lebanese Army

ALF: Arab Liberation Front

CP: Communist Party

CUP: Committee of Unity and Progress

MNF: Multinational Forces

IDF: Israeli Defence Force

LAA: Lebanese Arab Army

LF: Lebanese Forces

LNМ: Lebanese National Movement

OACAL: Organisation for Communist Action in Lebanon

OUP: Committee of Union and Progress

PLA: Palestinian Liberation Army

PLO: Palestinian Liberation Organisation

PRM: Palestinian Resistance Movement

PSP: Progressive Socialist Party

SISC: Supreme Islamic Shi'ite Council

SSNP: Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party

UNIFIL: United Nations Interim Force for Southern Lebanon

### ***Transliteration Note***

Most of Arabic words or names are presented in their most common English form. For transliteration of other Arabic words or names the simplified system is used, based upon that of the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. Town and village names are used in the common spelling. For plural words, an *s* is added except for the plural of *alim*, which is given as *ulama*, *za'im* as *zu'ama* and *Shi'as* as *Shi'ites* or *Shi'a*.



## GLOSSARY

**Abu Bakr:** First *Caliph* from 632 to 634 CE, succeeding Muhammad, of the Muslim Umma according to Sunni Muslim understanding.

**Abu Dharr al-Ghiffari (Jundub b. Junada):** A companion of the Prophet who was loyal to Imam Ali. He died in 32 (A.H.), 651 (A.D.) after being exiled by Uthman.

**Ali:** The nephew and son-in-law of Muhammad, one of the first to accept the prophethood of Muhammad. A close associate of Muhammad is believed by Shi'i Muslims to have been chosen by Muhammad to be his successor, as both the *Caliph* (ruler) and *Imam* (religious leader and interpreter of the will of God) for the *umma*. According to them he was unjustly deprived of his rightful leadership by the first three caliphs recognized by Sunni Muslims. Sunnites recognize Ali to be the fourth caliph.

**Alids:** Descendants of the Prophet Muhammad's cousin Ali, the family who claims to be the heirs of the Prophet's religious and political legacy and the rightful leaders of the Muslim community. They are recognized by one or another Shi'i Muslim sect, beginning with Ali and continuing with one or another of his direct lineal descendants.

**Alim** (plural *ulama*): Literally 'learned man.' Someone trained in the traditional Islamic sciences, and qualified in Islamic law.

**Ashura:** Fast day on the tenth of the month of *Muharram*; commemoration of the martyrdom of Husein at the Battle of Kerbala.

**Ayatollah:** Literally 'sign of God.' The highest-ranking scholar of law in the Twelver Shi'i religious hierarchy.

**Bey:** Ottoman rank for a high functionary.



**Caliph:** Anglicisation of the Arabic word *khalifa*. Literally means lieutenant, deputy or successor; that is successor or deputy of the Prophet Muhammad and head of the Sunni Muslim community according to Sunni Islam; however, not having religious authority to interpret the Qur'an, or to declare the divine word. The four 'orthodox' or 'rightly-guided' Caliphs, according to the Sunnis were Abu Bakr (623-34), Umar (634-44), Uthman (644-56) and Ali (656-61). For the Shi'ites, the first three were usurpers and Ali was Muhammad's directly designated successor.

**Caliphate:** The institution of the *caliph* in Sunni Islam. The succession to the rule of Muhammad over the *umma*, from the first *caliph*, Abu Bakr, down to 1924, when the Caliphate (long become powerless) was abolished in Turkey.

**Emir:** Title of a military commander, governor or prince. Sometimes given to governors of provinces, or even of states (in Arabia). Could also be used as a hereditary title by certain families especially in Lebanon.

**Faqih (pl. Fuqaha):** Scholar of Islamic law, a jurist.

**Fatima:** The daughter of the Prophet and the wife of Ali b. Abi Talib, the mother of Hasan and Husein.

**Fatwa:** An authoritative opinion of Islamic law, a verdict given by a *mufti* or a *mujtahid*; collected legal opinions form a corpus which modifies the application of the early codes of Islamic law. Unlike the judgment of a *qadi*, the *fatwa* has no legal weight in itself, but is taken into consideration when a legally binding ruling is given. It is simply a statement of what the *mufti* considers the law to be.

**Fiqh:** The study of law or jurisprudence in Islam, focused exclusively on the *Shari'a* and its implications.

**Ghazi:** A frontier warrior for the faith.

**Hadith (pl. Ahadith):** A literary form that communicates the sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad transmitted by his companions; collections of *hadith* are second in authority to the *Qur'an* as a source of Muslim belief and practice. Shi'ism, seeking to authenticate the chain transmission of *hadith*, considers the correlation of the text of the *hadith* with the *Qur'an* as a necessary condition for its validity. In Shi'i sources there are many *hadiths* of the Prophet and the Imams with authentic chains of transmission which themselves assert that a *hadith* contrary to the *Qur'an* has no value. Only that *hadith* can be considered valid which is in agreement with the *Qur'an*. As for the *hadiths* whose agreement or disagreement cannot be established, according to instructions received from Imams they are passed by in silence without being accepted or rejected.

**Hajj:** The official (or greater) pilgrimage to Mecca to carry out specific rituals during the 12th month, the Month of Pilgrimage, which is a religious obligation of all Muslims, at least once in their lifetime.

**Husein:** Second son of Ali, regarded as the third Imam among Shi'i Muslims, martyred with his immediate followers at Kerbala, on the 10th of Muharram in 680 CE, by the Sunni *Caliph*, Mu'âwiya, and his army.

**'Ijma:** Literally communal consensus. In other words, the agreement of learned men on the principles of the law. It was considered that the community as a whole could not agree on a religious error, so it provided for some schools of jurisprudence a valid source for law.

**Ijtihad:** Exerting the sum total of one's ability to uncover God's rulings on issues from their sources (*Qur'an*, *Sunna*, *'Ijma*, etc.). Sometimes divided into complete *ijtihad*, the ability of one to independently arrive at God's rulings in all areas of *fiqh*; and partial *ijtihad*, the ability of one to do so only in certain areas of *fiqh* in which they have exerted such efforts. Also, the degree one reaches in order to be qualified as a *mujtahid*, one who is capable of deriving religious decisions on his own.

**'Ilm:** knowledge, especially of religious truths; the knowledge which guides behavior.

**Imam:** Spiritual leader. According to context, it can simply be the prayer leader in a mosque, the appointed leader of Friday prayers in a city or the holder of Supreme religious and political authority, in succession to Muhammad. In Sunni Islam, the *Imamate* in this last sense - the *Caliphate* - is a matter of election and/or consent by the leaders of the community, though the Imam should in principle come from Muhammad's tribe of Quraysh. In Shi'i Islam, the *Imam* is the rightful successor and ruler of the *umma*; divinely guided interpreter of the *Qur'an* and the *Shari'a* for the faithful; specifically chosen by Muhammad to be his nephew and son-in-law Ali and passed through twelve of his successors, until the last - the Hidden Imam - disappeared to re-emerge at the end of time to usher in a millennium of peace.

**Imamate:** The institution of the Imam and the succession of Imams in one or another sect of Shi'i Islam.

**Isma'ilis:** A branch of Shi'ism that looks to the leadership of Isma'il, a son of Ja'far al-Sadiq and his descendants; this branch includes the Fatimids.

**Jihad:** 'Struggle in the way of God'; effort directed toward inner religious perfection. Militant striving in the cause of God to bring about true submission to God; first of all in oneself, next in one's home and immediate environment, then in one's local community, and finally in communities beyond one's own. In the *Qur'an* this probably refers to the first Muslim raids against opponents. Later it came to be used of any war undertaken in the name of Islam against unbelievers or backsliders.

**Kharijism:** Early religio-political movements in Islam; its followers held that the *Caliph* should be elected by the community.

**Mahdi:** The "guided" one, the person who will appear at the End of Time and establish Islam and the reign of justice. In Shi'i Islam, the doctrine of the *Mahdi* declares the expectation of the *Mahdi* to bring salvation to the world. The *Imamate* sect believes that the *Mahdi* is a definite person that he was born in 256 A.H. (870 A.D.), that he is alive now, the son of Imam Hasan al-Askari, and that his name is Muhammad. Many narrators have passed *ahadith* from the Prophet and his

Household concerning his birth and his absence. The Imamate must continue uninterrupted, although the Imam may live hidden among mankind until Allah wills that he reappear on a certain day.

**Mufti:** Muslim legal expert appointed by the government in the major towns as head of the legal system, qualified to give formal legal opinions (*fatwa*) rather than actual judgements on issues presented to him. Ranked above the *qadi*.

**Muhammad** (570-632): The final prophet, through whom God chose to reveal the *Qur'an*, according to Muslims.

**Muharram:** The first month of the Islamic calendar.

**Mujahed** (pl. *mujahedeen*): One who fights in the *jihad*.

**Mujtahid:** One who acquires the degree of *ijtihad* and thus becomes capable of deriving religious decisions on his own. Also, a specialist in the deduction of the Islamic rules from four major sources: the *Qur'an*, *Hadith*, conscience of the community, and reasoning.

**Mulla:** particularly in Shi'i Islam, an *alim* who carries out everyday functions such as leading the prayers in a mosque.

**Mu'tazilites** (or *Mu'tazila*): A group and school of Muslim theologians, strongest in the ninth century CE. Through rationalist philosophical reflection, the school raised speculation concerning the nature of God, the origin of the *Qur'an*, and human free will beyond the position which later (and largely in reaction against them) came to be the position of orthodox Islam. Specifically, they criticized the literal interpretation of anthropomorphic passages in the Quran; these passages held that the *Qur'an* was created by God in time. Therefore, God wills only things that are just and good, never evil, and consequently humans in their exercise of free choice are responsible for the evil in the world.

***Qadi:*** Judge in a court administering the *Shari'a*. Also, during the Ottoman Empire a civil judge.

***Qur'an:*** The holy scripture of Islam, believed by Muslims to have been supernaturally revealed, word for word, to Muhammad as the last and final revelation before the end of history as we know it. Shi'i grasp of the Qur'an strongly stresses the distinction between exoteric and esoteric meanings of Qur'anic verses. This parallels the distinction common to both main branches of Islam between those verses of the Qur'an which are of obvious meaning, and those verses which are of ambiguous meaning. However, the Shi'i concept goes much further. First, verses are not merely either clear or ambiguous; rather, there are numerous levels of meaning within any one verse, most of which are esoteric and can only be elucidated by an Imam who is a direct channel for divine knowledge. Indeed, though most verses have only one exoteric meaning, they can have up to seven levels of different esoteric significances. This directly relates to the principle of *taqiyya*, for many of the esoteric interpretations were not to be shared with Muslims who were not Shi'i. Not only would these Muslims be incapable of understanding, but to share esoteric meanings could put the Shi'ites in mortal danger. The Imams are the only ones capable of elucidating its inner, and hence its real, meanings.

***Ramadan:*** The ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar, in which all Muslims are obligated to fast from dawn to dark. It is regarded as a holy month, commemorating the first revelation of the *Qur'an* to Muhammad, when all Muslims are expected to draw nearer to God and call to mind the events of the central story of Islam.

***Rashidun:*** The so-called "Rightly Guided Caliphs", the first four successors (*Caliphs*) of Muhammad according to Sunni understanding (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali). These four are believed to have been particularly exemplary in keeping with the *Sunna* of Muhammad, placing God and the good of the *umma* before their own interests.

***Salat:*** The ritual or liturgical prayer in Islam, involving a formal sequence of words and gestures facing Mecca for which one must be ritually purified or cleansed; obligatory for all Muslims 5 times a day.

**Sanjak:** Administrative division of a province.

**Sayyed:** A descendant of the Holy Prophet.

**Sawm:** Fasting from dawn until dark during the month of *Ramadan*, one of the five pillars of Islam.

**Shahada:** “witnessing”; the Muslim profession of faith.

**Shaheed:** Witness, martyr.

**Shari’a:** The revealed and the canonical laws of Islam. The sacred law of God, as revealed in the *Qur’an* and interpreted in the *Sunna* of the Prophet and the orthodox traditions of *fiqh*. The legislative power in the government lies in the hands of legislative assembly. The legislators are to make rules and regulations within the scope and dimensions of the *Qur’an* and the *Sunna* of the Prophet. These rules constitute the *Shari’a*. Shi’ism believes that the Divine Law of Islam, the *Shari’a*, whose substance is found in the Book of God and in the tradition, *Sunna* of the Holy Prophet, will remain valid to the Day of Judgment and can never, nor will ever, be altered. A government which is really Islamic cannot under any pretext refuse completely to carry out the *Shari’a*’s injunctions. The only duty of an Islamic government is to make decisions by consultation within the limits set by the *Shari’a* and in accordance with the demands of the moment.

**Shaykh:** ‘Old man’ - a title indicating respect. An elder, head, chief, respected man of religion. Most commonly used for learned teachers, but also for political rulers (esp. in Arabia) or for people of importance - an important leader in a tribe, village, guild etc.

**Shi’a (or Shi’i or Shi’ite) (Fivers, Seveners, Twelvers):** Literally, “party”, “faction” or “sect”. The adherents or followers of ‘Ali, believing that Muhammad had chosen him and through him a line of descendents as Imam, the rightful successor and ruler of the *umma* and as divinely guided interpreter of the *Qur’an* and the *Shari’a* for the faithful. There are various sects of Shi’ism, which



differentiate themselves according to the person whom they take to be the last *Imam* (as having been the 5th, the 7th, or the 12th Imam to follow Muhammad).

***Shura:*** Consultation.

***Sunna:*** “Custom”, “usual procedure”, or “way of acting”, especially of Muhammad. In general, the word Sunna means habit, practice, customary procedure, or action, norm and usage sanctioned by tradition. In specific, any time the word Sunna is mentioned, it is to refer to Prophet Muhammad; it means his sayings, practices, and living habits. When referring to Muhammad, it is regarded as the first source of *Shari’a* after the *Qur’an* and an authoritative example of the correct way to live a Muslim life. The Prophet’s Sunna is remembered and transmitted by means of the *Hadith*. The Sunna may confirm what is mentioned in *Qur’an*, interpret and explain it, specify what is meant by some general verses, limit and restrict the meaning of some verse in it, or may explain something that has been revealed in *Qur’an*.

***Sunni* (or *Sunnite*):** Popular name for the Muslim majority, who identify themselves as followers of the Prophet’s *Sunna*, the historic succession of *Caliphs*, as opposed to the *Alids*.

***Tanzimat:*** A generalised term referring to the reforms of administration and government undertaken in the Ottoman Empire in the period 1839-1880.

***Taqiyya:*** Religious dissimulation. That is, everyone, when he feels that there is danger to himself or to his property through the preaching of his beliefs or through the practicing of his beliefs in public, should practice *taqiyya*. It is known that the Shi’ites and their Imams have suffered much and have been denied their freedom throughout history, and that no sect or people have suffered like them. Thus they have been forced on many occasions to practice *taqiyya* in order to conceal themselves from those with other beliefs; to keep themselves and their practices hidden, as long as their religion and their survival was threatened. And this is their cause for being distinguished from others by their *taqiyya*.

**Ta'ziya:** The Shi'i passion drama that commemorates the martyrdom of Imam Husein at Kerbala; performed in Shi'i communities the first 10 days of *Muharram*, but especially on the 10th.

**Ulama:** The learned class of legal and religious scholars in Islam; the custodians of Islamic teaching and of *Shari'a* in particular.

**Umma:** The community of Islam, theoretically embracing all Muslims but referring more particularly to the Muslim social order, established by Muhammad when he first emigrated to Medina, in which the whole of life is brought under the rule of *Shari'a* as revealed in the *Qur'an*.

**Waqf:** An endowment, an irrevocable grant of the income of property set aside in perpetuity for a religious or charitable purpose, for example to pay for the upkeep of a mosque or a hospital.

**Watan:** 'Nation' or 'fatherland.' In modern Arabic used to describe the individual Arab states, rather than the Arab nation as a whole.

**Wilaya:** A legal competence; power delegated to a governor; provinces governed from regional capitals.

**Wilaya al-faqih:** the guardian of Islamic Jurisprudence; the 'virtuous Jurist.'

**Zakat:** One of the 5 basic Islamic duties; a portion (usually figured at one fortieth) of one's wealth beyond basic living expenses that Muslims are obligated to share each year with the poor.

# Chronology

## *1. Early Development of Shi'ism*

**7<sup>th</sup> Century AD:** Islamic conquest of the Arab Peninsula. Consolidation of the Islamic order.

**632:** Death of the Prophet Muhammad. The first signs of division within the Islamic *Umma* become obvious. Issues regarding the succession of the Prophet split the Islamic community. The group of Ali rises to support the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, Ali, as the rightful successor. The same group objects to the election of Abu Bakr.

**632-634:** Abu Bakr succeeds the Prophet. Further consolidation of Islamic state- apparatus. Beginning of the period of the so-called 'Rightly Guided' Caliphs, the '*Rashidun*'.

**634-644:** Umar ibn al-Khattab succeeds *Abu Bakr*. The group of Ali still exists on the informal level, as partisans of Ali without representing as yet concrete religious doctrines.

**644-656:** Uthman bin 'Affan succeeds to the *Caliphate*. During the period of his rule, the existing social unrest brought about the open revolt against his rule. A serious upheaval, known as 'the great strife' leads to his murder and the accusation that Ali was the one behind the assassination.

**656-661:** Ali succeeds as the fourth *Caliph*. With his assassination, the period of the so-called four 'Rightly Guided' *Caliphs*, the '*Rashidun*' ends.

**661-750:** Succession of the *Umayyad* dynasty to the *Caliphate*. Damascus becomes the capital of the *Umayyad Caliphate*. The Caliphal state is transformed into a political entity. The *Caliph* himself, detached from the role of the messenger of God, acquires the role of the political leader of the community. During this period, the group of Ali's partisans becomes attached to the orbit of social movements objecting to the Umayyad policies. Along the lines of internal dissension with the emergence of the sectarian group of the *Kharijites*, yet another internal schism between the group of Ali and the *Umayyads* is formalized.

**680:** The Battle of Karbala takes place between the son of Ali, Husein and the son of the governor of Syria Mu'awiya, Yazid. At the battle, Husein died along with most of his family.

**750-1258:** Rise of the *Abbasid* dynasty to the *Caliphate*. Replacement of Damascus by Baghdad as the capital of the Abbasid state. Employment of strict religious symbols that affirmed the caliphal authority as divinely given by virtue of the membership to the family of the Prophet. Shi'ites construct and develop their own religious position diverging even more from the mainstream Sunnites. Rejection of the legitimacy of the first three *Caliphs* as authoritative sources of Muslim religious teaching. Construction of separate *hadith* and law on the basis of the habitual behaviour of Ali. Formation of the notion of the true *Caliph* descended from the family of Ali. Invention by Ja'far al-Sadiq of the notions of *nass* and '*ilm*', as well as the practice of *Taqiyya*.

**874:** Disappearance of the twelfth *Imam*, Muhammad al-Mahdi. Even though nothing is certain about his fate, for the twelver Shi'ites he is thought to have disappeared and communicated with the earth through four agents, the so-called '*wakils*'.

**10<sup>th</sup> Century:** Disintegration of the High *Caliphate* as a unified system and its replacement by autonomous centers of power with a nominal allegiance to the *Caliph*. The advent of the so-called '*Shi'ite century*', symbolized the unprecedented flourishing of Shi'ite theological thought, doctrines and rituals. Shi'i adoption of the rational theology on the basis of the *Mu'tazilis* school of thought. Gradual development of the doctrine of the *Imamate* based on the premise that the sacred order of Islam did not vanish as long as the designated *Imam* was present to represent the divine authority on earth.

**940:** The death of the fourth *wakil*, the fourth agent that linked the disappeared twelfth *Imam*, Muhammad al-Mahdi, to the temporal world. The period of the so-called '*lesser Ghayba*', or lesser absence ends and the period of the '*Greater Ghayba*' begins, signifying the beginning of occultation.

**1058-1157:** Under the Seljuqid rule, repressive measures were inflicted upon the Shi'ites.

**1098-1291:** Control of the Syrian coastal and northern parts by the Crusaders.

**1261-1517:** The Mamluk rule initiated new repressive measures against the Shi'ites.

## ***2. Shi'ites of Lebanon***

**944-1055:** Shi'i Hamdanid dynasty ruled in Aleppo.

**1021-1028:** Banu Mirdas dynasty ruled in Southern Syria with Sidon as capital.

**1058-1124:** Emirate of Ayn al-Dawla bin Aqil, centered in Tyre.

**1109:** Destruction of Tripoli by the Crusaders.

**1124:** Occupation of Tyre by the Crusaders.

**1305:** Mamluk expedition in Kisrawan. Expulsion of the overwhelmingly Shi'ite population that sought refuge in Baalbek, Jizzin and Jabal Amil.

**1516-1918:** Lebanon, considered as a part of Greater Syria, under Ottoman control. Heavy persecution of Shi'ites because of their connection with the Savafid Persia, and the hostile relations of the latter with the Ottoman Empire.

**1770s:** Alliance of the population of Jabal Amil with the rebellious chief of the *wilaya* of Sidon, Dhahir al-Umar.

**1770-1804:** Administration of Jabal Amil by Ahmad al-Jazzar. During this period a vigorous campaign launched by Ahmad al-Jazzar against the Shi'i population of the region.

**1861:** Al-Hirmil was formally integrated into Mount Lebanon.

**1864:** Ottoman Syria was reorganized into two *wilayas*, that of Syria comprising of Sidon and Tripoli, and that of Aleppo with both Shi'a areas, Jabal Amil and Ba'albek, becoming parts of the *wilaya* of Syria.

**1887:** *Wilaya* of Beirut was created and Jabal Amil was absorbed into it.

**1909:** Shaykh Arif al-Zayn began the publication of the literary and political journal, al-Irfan, which became the leading form of intellectual discourse in the Shi'i south.

**1918:** In the aftermath of World War I, the League of Nations recognised the French mandate over Greater Syria including Lebanon.

**1920:** Legal extension of Mount Lebanon by the French to include all of what is now Lebanon. Political strengthening of the Maronite community, the latter's population would exceed that of any Muslim group in the new district; inclusion of the Shi'i areas within 'Greater Lebanon'.

**1919-1920:** Popular revolts in Jabal Amil and the Bekaa against the French mandate.

**1926:** Decree for the recognition of the independence of the Shi'ites as a religious community within mandate Lebanon. In matters of personal status the Shi'ites were to be judged on the basis of the Ja'farite rite by their Qadi on appeal by a special Chamber of Cassation, composed of the President and two assessors to be chosen from among the Shi'i Jurists.

**1941:** British and Free French capture of Beirut; Liberation of Beirut from Vichy Forces; France promises full independence for Lebanon.

**1943:** Bishara al-Khury (Maronite leader) and Riad al-Solh (Sunni leader) reach unwritten agreement, the National Pact, to allow the country to proceed to independence.

**1944:** Formation of a sectarian government in Lebanon. The division of governmental portfolios was conducted according to a census taken in 1932. The Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies was to be a Shi'i.

**1946:** French troops leave Lebanon.

**1948:** First Arab-Israeli war as the independent state of Israel is declared. Large influx of refugees flees from Palestine and Haifa to mainly Lebanon and Jordan. Shi'i areas suffer from increasing unemployment and deteriorating living conditions.

**1950-1970:** Shift in the focus of the Lebanese government away from agriculture toward a finance-based economy. Disproportionately high taxes and low government funding of rural areas rendered the traditional Shi'i regions the poorest and least developed regions in Lebanon; in these regions high illiteracy rates and low income and employment levels reigned throughout this period.

**1958:** First Civil war erupts in Lebanon. President Camille Chamoun invokes Eisenhower Doctrine to call in the U.S. Marines; replacement of Camille Chamoun by General Shehab as President.

**1958-1964:** Development of underprivileged Shi'i areas under President's Shehab mandate.



**1960-1980:** Urbanisation of a large number of the Shi'i population and their subsequent politicisation. These populations moved to Beirut where they became increasingly frustrated and organised around the Leftist parties and the communal organisation of Amal.

**1967, December 19:** Approval by the Parliament of the Law 72/67 for the creation of the Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council. According to the law, the Shi'i community in Lebanon is recognized as distinct from the Sunnites.

**1969, May:** Musa al- Sadr is elected President of the SISC by the combined Executive and Judicial Committees.

**1970-1971:** The bloody crush of the Palestinians in Jordan (Black September) sent thousands of Palestinian refugees to Lebanon. The Palestinian refugee issue was to become a divisive force in Lebanon and within the Shi'i community.

**1972:** Khyam village in the south is devastated by an Israeli attack.

**1973:** Ten thousand tobacco planters demonstrate in January, and occupy the building of the new Régie des Tombacs at Nabatiyya. Demand higher payment for crops and right to unionise. In June, thirteen out of nineteen Shi'i Deputies sign a pact committing themselves to struggle for full rights for the Shi'i community. Demands for fuller representation for the Shi'ites.

**1974:** In February, following meeting of Musa al-Sadr with ex-President Helou and ex-speaker of Parliament Hamadi, the sixteen demands of the Shi'i community are published. In March, thousands of Shi'ites gather at Ba'albek to hear Musa al-Sadr and take oath to fight for the Shi'i demands; many arms on display. The creation of the Movement of the Deprived is announced. In April, Israel attacks six border villages. In November, the SISC Executive Committee proposes the extension of the mandate of Musa al-Sadr from six to sixty-five years of age. In the December legislative by-election in Nabatiyya, Rafiq Shahin backed by Musa al-Sadr wins over the candidate backed by the parliamentary speaker, the powerful *za'im* of Nabatiyya, Kamal As'ad, by a large margin of twenty thousands votes compared with seven thousands votes the As'ad-backed candidate and five thousands votes of the left candidate.

**1975:** In April, war erupted between the Maronite forces and the militias of the Lebanese National Movement (LNM), including the Shi'i militias. The PLO would eventually join the fighting on the side of the LNM. In June, Musa al-Sadr launches his hunger strike so as to protest

against the increasing fighting. In July, Amal's existence is disclosed by an explosion during a military training session near Ba'albek, in which thirty trainees are killed.

**1976:** Attack by the Christian militia, the Lebanese Front, of the Shi'i Karantina and al-Nab'a districts. Ten thousands Shi'ites evacuated their homes.

**1978:** In August, Musa al-Sadr disappeared while on a trip to Libya. Israeli invasion of Lebanon; Israeli withdrawal to a buffer zone under the control of the pro-Israeli Southern Lebanon Army (SLA).

**1979:** Iranian revolution and overthrow of the Shah.

**1980:** Nabih Birri takes over from Husein Huseini as the leader of Amal.

**1981:** Battle between Amal and the National Movement for control of the suburbs of Burj al-Barajniah. Soon the battle is transferred to Nabatiyya.

**1982:** Second Israeli invasion of Lebanon and formal expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon. Stationing of an international peacekeeping force in Beirut (UNIFIL). Entering of Syrian Army in Lebanon and Syrian occupation of the Bekaa Valley. Israeli withdrawal around a self-declared security buffer zone in southern Lebanon. Hizballah (party of God) organisation and its activities became for the first time revealed. In February, Amal and PRM clashed in Beirut. In June, one thousand Iranian Revolutionary Guards arrived and were stationed in Ba'albek. In July, Husayn al-Musawi was expelled from Amal and he created in the Bekaa the movement of Islamic Amal.

**1983:** Participation of Nabih Birri in the Geneva Conference.

**1984:** In February, Amal sieged West Beirut with druze help. In the battle that followed, the Army became disintegrated and most of the recruits of the sixth brigade moved to Amal. In April, Nabih Birri took part in the Lausanne Conference. In May, he received the portfolios of reconstruction and 'affairs of the south', in the Karami government. In July, a *fatwa* was issued forbidding Muslims to sell their land.

**1985:** The battle of the Camps between Amal and the PLO.

**1987:** Fighting between Amal militia and pro-Arafat factions of the PLO in West Beirut. Syria increases its military presence. Syria intervenes to end the War of the Camps.

**1988-1989:** Battle between Amal and Hizballah for the control of the southern suburbs of Beirut.

**1988:** Appointment by the outgoing President Jumayyil of General Aoun as acting Maronite Prime Minister. The administration of Prime Minister Selim al-Hoss refuses to step down.

**1989, August 15:** Formation of the National Front. This was consisted of the Progressive Socialist Party, Amal, Hizballah, and pro-Syrian Palestinian militias. They vowed to overthrow Aoun's regime.

**1989, August 24:** The National Front launched an offensive against the forces of General Aoun.

**1989, September 30:** Meeting of thirty-one Christian and thirty-one Muslim assembly-delegates in Taif, Saudi Arabia; dealing with the issue of confessional representation of the various communities in the state.

**1989, October 12:** In response to the demands of the National Front at Taif, a vote was conducted for the enlargement of the Lebanese parliament to 108 seats, the establishment of even quotas between Muslims and Christians, and the limitation of the Presidential powers.

**1989, November 24:** Election of Ilyas al-Hrawi as president; Intra-Maronite power struggle between Hrawi and ousted former Prime Minister General Aoun. Aoun still remains in control of his forces and refuses to allow the implementation of the reforms.

**1990-1991:** Continuing fighting between Amal and Hizballah.

**1990:** With Syrian assistance General Aoun is eventually deposed.

**1990, April-July:** Negotiation of President Hrawi, French diplomats, and representatives from the Vatican with Gen Aoun attempts to get him to agree to the terms of the Taif agreement. Also, increasing tension between Hizballah and Amal for their domination over the south.

**1990, September 21:** Law enforcement of the Taif agreement by President Hrawi; provisions for a larger assembly, equal Christian-Muslim ratio, weaker Presidency, and a stronger Cabinet.

**1991, April 26:** Announcement by Amal of the dismantling of its militia and the return of its weapons to the government by the deadline set in the Taif accords.

**1991, May:** Voluntary disarmament of most militias. Refusal of both Hizballah and the Southern Lebanese Army to disarm themselves.

**1991, May 21:** Hizballah's announcement of the replacement of Subhi al-Tufayli by Abbas al-Musawi as secretary general.

**1992, February 16:** In a helicopter raid, the IDF killed Hizballah leader Abbas Musawi, his wife, his son, and four bodyguards.

**1992, May 6:** Resignation of Prime Minister Karami.

**1992, June 30:** Announcement by Hizballah leader, Hassan Nasrallah, that Hizballah would participate in the upcoming first post-war elections.

**1992, July 24:** Announcement of the parliamentary elections, organised in three stages, on August 23 and 30, and on September 6.

**1992, August 24:** Resignation of Husein Huseini as speaker of the Chamber of Deputies; Huseini's accusation of a fraudulent voting in his electoral district, the Ba'albek, demanding that the voting be annulled. Huseini's defeat by Hizballah.

**1992, September 9:** Announcement of the election results. Amal and Hizballah victory with eighteen and twelve seats won respectively.

**1992, October 20:** Election of Amal leader Birri as speaker of the Chamber of Deputies. He immediately called for parliamentary elections within four years and the formation of a non-sectarian government.

**1992, October 22:** Appointment of Rafiq al-Hariri as Prime Minister.

**1992, November 10:** The IDF began to mass troops on the Lebanese border.

**1992, December 1:** Maronite and Hizballah leaders met to discuss ways to preserve the sectarian nature of the Lebanese government.

**1993, March 6:** Hizballah-Amal disagreement in southern Beirut escalated into a clash involving light weapons.

**1993, July 25:** Heavy Israeli air, naval and artillery attacks against Hizballah positions in southern Lebanon. Refocus of general Israeli strategy on shelling of large parts of southern Lebanon so as to render them uninhabitable and thus remove many of the Hizballah locations of operation.

**1993, September 13:** Violent suppression by the Lebanese Army troops of a demonstration in southern Beirut; nine protesters were killed. The demonstration involved Hizballah groups protesting against the signing of the Israeli-PLO peace accords. Palestinian opponents of the

PLO-Israeli peace accord marched in Lebanon's refugee camps. PLO supporters in Lebanon celebrated.

**1993, September 14:** Hizballah attack of the Israeli self-declared security zone to protest the signing of the accord. In Beirut five thousands Palestinian and Hizballah supporters attended the funerals of those killed on the 13th. At the funeral, mourners condemned the Lebanese government. Hizballah leader, Shaykh Hassan Nasrallah, called for the resignation of Lebanese Prime Minister al-Hariri.

**1993, 21 September:** About three thousands Hizballah supporters rallied on the road to Beirut against the killing by the government of eight protesters on September 13<sup>th</sup>.

**1994, 28 February:** Amal-Hizballah fighting at a southern Lebanese village.

**1994, 11 March:** Attendance of hundreds of armed Hizballah members of a rally to mark Jerusalem day. Governmental orders for the arrest of the armed Hizballah members. In an attempt to ban terrorist attacks, the Lebanese government introduced the death penalty for politically motivated murders.

**1994, 26 March:** Announcement by the Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri that he would ban Hizballah unless it restricted its activities to attacks on Israeli occupation forces in southern Lebanon.

**1994, 10 May:** A Hizballah-run television station broke the government ban on private newscasts.

**1995, 5 June:** the most important Shi'i fast of *Ashura* was causing divisions among Lebanon's Shi'i and Sunni communities. For the past few years, the Shi'i had been celebrating the holiday 'more aggressively' and had been bringing their celebrations to new areas of Beirut, including some Sunni areas. This had angered some Sunni residents and some minor incidents between Sunnis and Shi'ites occurred.

**1995, 31 August:** Amal supporters went on strike on the 17th anniversary of the disappearance of Imam Mussa al-Sadr, the Shi'i cleric who founded Amal.

**1996, 10 April through 26 April:** Israel launches an offensive against Hizballah targets in southern Lebanon, known as 'Operation Grapes of Wrath.' During the offensive, more than two hundreds people (mostly civilians) were killed in Lebanon total and hundreds more were



wounded. More than four hundred thousands were forced from their homes in Lebanon. About fifty-five Israelis were wounded during the campaign, but there were no Israeli fatalities.

**1996, 22 May:** Human Rights Watch calls upon the U.S. to halt weapon shipments to Israel until the country vows to end attacks on civilians in southern Lebanon.

**1996, 27 May:** More than two hundred thousands people gathered throughout Lebanon to commemorate the Shi'ite martyr, Imam Husein, killed in 680 by Yazid. The rallies were seen as a massive show of public support for Hizballah.

**1996, 30 July:** The UN Security Council renewed for six months (through January 31, 1997) the mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

**1996, 18 August:** The first round of elections for Lebanon's parliament is held. Unlike in 1992 elections, Christians in the Mount Lebanon region participated in the elections and posed a challenge to the Syrian-controlled government. Election observers reported that gross irregularities and violent outbreaks-including one death-marred the elections. In the end, a candidate list headed by pro-Syrian Druze leader, Walid Jumblatt, won all eight seats in the Druze dominated district, and pro-government candidates won thirty-two of the thirty-five seats contested in this round of elections.

**1996, 1 September:** Voting for legislators took place in Beirut, where parliamentary seats follow the region's population patterns; there are six Sunni Muslim seats, two Shi'ites, one Druze, five Armenians, two Greek Orthodox, one Maronite Christian, one Greek Catholic and one Protestant. Allegations of corruption marred this round of voting.

**1996, 7 September:** Syria averted a divisive vote in Lebanon's fourth round of parliamentary elections by forging an alliance between rival opposition groups Amal and Hizballah for seats in southern Lebanon. This alliance won twenty-one of the twenty-three seats reserved for south Lebanon.

**1996, 15 September:** The final round of elections took place in eastern Lebanon. As in the south, Syria played an active role in forming the list of candidates for this region in an effort to quell tensions among pro-government groups. Under a deal brokered by Syria, Hizballah leaders were able to select the Maronite Christian candidate for the Ba'albek-Hirmil region.



**1997, 6 July:** Among four thousands protestors in the Bekaa Valley, former Hizballah Secretary-General, Shaykh Sobhi Tofaili, called for a 'Revolution of the Hungry', a protest against declining living standards in Lebanon. Sheikh Tofaili demanded free education and free hospitals for Lebanon and encouraged a campaign of civil disobedience against the Lebanese government, including the refusal to pay taxes.

**1997, 12 November:** Ten days after former Hizballah chief, Shaykh Sobhi Tofaili, encouraged thousands of people to block the roads to the Bekaa Valley in order to keep out two deputies to whose voting record he objected, the Lebanese cabinet ordered heightened security in the eastern section of Lebanon.

**1998, 24 May:** Lebanon holds its first round of municipal elections in thirty-five years, with voting beginning in the Mount Lebanon district. The municipal districts are not distributed according to confessional quotas as they are for national elections. In the first round of elections, Hizballah candidates defeated candidates backed by an alliance between the Sunni Prime Minister and Syrian-backed Amal, and opposition Christian candidates proved successful in the Christian-dominated portions of the region.

**1998, 8 June:** Candidates backed by Prime Minister Hariri were victorious in municipal elections in Beirut, where voting turnout was lower than expected, while Hizballah and Amal candidates split the votes in southern Lebanon.

**1998, 24 November:** Emile Lahoud was sworn in as the new President of Lebanon, replacing Elias Hrawi. Lahoud is a Christian Maronite who remains loyal to Syria and encourages strong ties between his government and that of al-Assad in Syria.

**1998, 29 November:** Hizballah forces continue to bomb Israeli posts all along the front of its security zone in Lebanon.

**1998, 2 December:** President Lahoud replaced Prime Minister Hariri with former Prime Minister Selim al-Hoss, a Sunni Muslim, after Hariri refused a request to stay on in the position.

**1998, 21 December:** In forming the new government, Lebanese officials broke with tradition and named officials to two security posts on the basis of straight professional credentials. A Greek Catholic was named to a security spot traditionally held for Shi'ites, and a Shi'i was named to a security position traditionally reserved for Maronite Christians.

**1999, 26 February:** More than two thousands villagers and students alike marched on the town of Arnoun to protest Israeli claims that the town was now to be included as part of the country's security zone within Lebanon. Representatives of Amal also led the protest. Following the first such public revolt years, Israel withdrew its claims on Arnoun.

**1999, 24-25 June:** The most violent Israel-Hizballah exchanges in years take place. Hizballah shelling of villages in northern Israel left two killed and sixteen wounded. Israeli air strikes near Beirut left at least ten people dead and another seventy-four injured. A peace agreement between Syria and Israel would possibly raise the issue of restraint of the Hizballah activity. Hizballah's attacks may have been intended to disrupt negotiations between Israel and Syria.

**2000, May 25:** Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon.

## Introduction

Throughout the war period in Lebanon, an increasing number of studies dealt with the Shi'i community of Lebanon and its reinforced political role during the course of the war.<sup>1</sup> This brought a change from previous discourses on Lebanon, which focused on either the state or the politically dominant communities, either the Maronites or the Sunnites. Prior to the war, there was a serious lack of material on the Shi'i community of Lebanon. This was so because during this period the Shi'i community suffered an increasing social and economic underdevelopment. As a result of this underdeveloped social and economic position, the political status of the community was rather marginal. Shi'i preoccupation with their harsh living conditions meant that there was little collective participation of the community in state affairs.

However, since the late sixties a new tendency became apparent for the Shi'ites. A massive mobilisation of the Shi'i segments of the population around leftist movements was gradually formed. On the eve of the war, this mobilisation and political awareness were channeled into comprehensive communal institutions and organisations. In the early eighties, the involvement of the main Shi'i movement into warfare rendered the whole community a more visible political player. It was then that the discourse changed considerably and the new political role of the Shi'ites was addressed.<sup>2</sup> When at a later stage the Shi'i organisation of Hizballah got

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<sup>1</sup> For more details on the Shi'i community in Lebanon, see the following; Fuad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr & the Shia of Lebanon*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1986; Helena Cobban, *The Shi'ite Community in Lebanon*, Washington: Islamic Institute & The American University, 1984; Elaina Hagopian (ed.), *Amal and the Palestinians*, Belmont, Massachusetts: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1981; Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shia Community*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1992; Augustus Richard Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987; Elizabeth Picard, *The Lebanese Shi'a and Political Violence*, Geneva, Switzerland: UNRISD, 1993; Elizabeth Picard, "De la 'Communauté-Classe' à la Résistance 'National'. Pour une Analyse du rôle des Chiites dans le Système Politique Libanais", in *Revue Française de Science Politique*, December 1985; Jacques Seguin, *Le Liban-Sud: Espace Périphérique, Espace Convoité*, Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1989.

<sup>2</sup> For more details on the revitalised political role of the Shi'ites, see the following; Marius Deeb, "Shia Movements in Lebanon: their Formation, Ideology, Social basis, and Links with Iran and Syria", in *Third World Quarterly*, April 1988; Kassir Khalaf, "L'Affirmation des Chiites Libanais", in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, May 1985; Salim Nasr, "Roots of the Shi'i Movement", in *MERIP Reports* no.133, vol.15 no.5, June 1985; Augustus Richard Norton, "Making Enemies in South Lebanon: Harakat Amal, the IDF, and South Lebanon", in *Middle East International*, vol. 3, no.3, 1984; Augustus Richard Norton, "Changing Actors and Leadership among the Shi'ites of Lebanon", in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, no. 482, November 1985; Elizabeth Picard, "Political Identities and Communal Identities: Shifting Mobilization Among the Lebanese Shi'a Through Ten Years of War, 1975-1985", in D. Ronen & D. Thomson (eds.) *Ethnicity, Politics and Development*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1986; Thom S.J. Sicking and Dr. Shereen Khairallah, *The Shi'a Awakening in Lebanon: A Search For Radical Change in a Traditional Way*. CEMAM Reports: Vision and Revision in Arab Society, vol. 2, 1974. Beirut: Dar El-Mashreq Publishers; John Yemma, "Lebanon's Shiite Muslims flex their Military Muscles", in the *Christian Science Monitor*, January 12, 1982.

involved in the war, the dominant discourse focused around the notions of 'Islamic fundamentalism', 'Islamic terrorism' and the like.<sup>3</sup>

Consequently, the changing fortunes of the community re-arranged the academic discourse accordingly. A common component of this new discourse was the study of the changing political role of the Shi'i community in the context of war. In their attempt to underline the communal change under way, scholars focused on the marginal position of the community throughout the first stages of the independent State of Lebanon. The majority of these studies however, were limited to the position of the Shi'i community within the independent State of Lebanon. Thus, a serious lack of attention was given to the Shi'i community throughout the pre-state period. In addition, an insufficient focus was granted to the Shi'i religious identity, that is, the Shi'i religious myths and symbols. These myths and symbols were analysed in so much as they related to the present practices and position of the community.<sup>4</sup> There was neither sufficient elaboration on the historical, social and political context that brought them into being, nor in-depth analysis of their inner significance, the context within which they were constructed and the different contexts to which they were adjusted.

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<sup>3</sup> Examples of a reformed Islamic discourse focused on Hizballah are the following sources; As'ad Abukhalil, "Ideology and Practice of Hizballah In Lebanon: Islamization of Leninist Organizational Principles", in *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 27, no.3, July 1991; Marius Deeb, *Militants Islamic Movements in Lebanon: Origins, Social basis, and Ideology*, Georgetown University: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, November 1986; Dalal El-Bizri, *Islamistes, Parlementaires et Libanais: Les interventions à l'Assemblée élus de la Jama'a Islamiyya et du Hizb Allah (1992- 1996)*, Beirut: Centre d'Études et de Recherches sur le Moyen-Orient Contemporain, document no. 3, 1999; Ayatollah Muhammed Hussein, Fadl Allah, "Islam and Violence in Political Reality", in *Middle East Insight*, no.4, no. 4-5, 1986; Ayatollah Muhammed Hussein Fadl Allah, "An Islamic Perspective on the Lebanese Experience", in *Middle East Insight*, Summer 1988; Ayatollah Muhammed Hussein Fadl Allah, "The Islamic Resistance in Lebanon and the Palestinian Uprising: The Islamic Jihad Perspective", in *Middle East Insight*, March/April 1988; Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance*, London: Fourth Estate, 1997; Salim Nasr, "L'Islam Politique et l'État Libanais (1920-1975)", in Olivier Carré, *L'Islam et l'État dans le Monde d'Aujourd'hui*, Paris : Presses Universitaires De France, 1982; Hamzeh A. Nizar, "Lebanon's Hizballah: from Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation", in *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 14, no.2, 1993; Hamzeh A. Nizar and Hrair R. Dekmejian, "The Islamic Spectrum of Lebanese Politics", in *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.XVI, no.3, Spring 1993; Judith Palmer Harik, "Between Islam and the System: Sources and Implications of Popular Support For Lebanon's Hizballah", in *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol.40, no.1, March 1996; R. K. Ramazani, "The Islamization of Lebanon?", in R.K.Ramazani, *Revolutionary Iran: Challenge and Response in the Middle East*, Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1986.

<sup>4</sup> For more details on Shi'i religious myths and symbols, see the following sources; Fuad Ajami, "Lebanon and its inheritors", in *Foreign affairs*, vol.63, no.4, Spring 1985; Talal Jaber, "Le Discours Shi'ite sur le pouvoir", in *Peuples Méditerranéens*, no. 20, July-September 1982; Salim Nasr, "Mobilisation Communautaire et Symbolique Religieuse: L'Imam Sadr et les Chi'ites du Liban (1970-1975)", in Olivier Carré et Paul Dumont (eds.), *Radicalismes Islamiques*, Tome I, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1985; Yves Gonzalez Quijano, "Les Interpretations d'un Rite: Célébrations de la 'Achoura au Liban", in *Maghreb-Machrek*, vol.115, January-February-March 1987.



In theoretical terms, this thesis deals with the relationship between ethnic and national identity, ethnicity and nationalism. Far from fixed, the notion of ethnic identity is highly contested. However, there is more or less consensus between different theories in terms of definitional characteristics of ethnic identity as representing a single community possessing a sense of solidarity and bound to a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories and a homeland. Nevertheless, the dividing lines between the existing theories of ethnicity are defined in terms of the actual nature of these characteristics; are they natural and given or are they socially constructed and thus changing over time? The so-called 'primordialist' theories<sup>5</sup> focus on ethnic identity as representing certain kinds of cultural bonds (myths of common origin, descent, ancestral territory, etc.) considered as 'given', in the sense that they persist from an early stage up to the present. At the opposite spectrum, the 'instrumentalists'<sup>6</sup> focus on the nature of ethnicity as socially constructed, in the sense that individuals can actually choose from a variety of ethnic cultures so as to forge their individual or collective identities. In between these two opposing theories, a set of theorists use a synthesis of both theoretical spectrums to define ethnic identity.<sup>7</sup>

As far as national identity is concerned, the concept is similarly contested both in terms of the nation cum state, as well as national cum ethnic identity continuum; both distinctions are interrelated in various ways. Consequently, the establishment of modern states brought up terms such as 'national homelands' and 'national sovereignty' granted to the people by historical right. However once more, the actual definition of this 'national space' both vis-à-vis the state and the ethnic community became split between opposing theories. Hence, notions of identity emerged to distinguish between ethnic identity as a commitment to 'primordial' sentiments and civic identity related to the political domain and articulating a desire for

<sup>5</sup> See, Edward Shills, "Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties", in *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 8, 1957; Clifford Geertz (ed.), *Old Societies and New States*, U.S.: Free Press, 1963.

<sup>6</sup> See, Paul R. Brass "Elite Groups, Symbol Manipulation, and Ethnic Identity among the Muslims of South Asia", in David Taylor and Malcolm Yapp (eds.) *Political Identity in South Asia*, London: Curzon Press, 1979, p.p. 35-77; Paul R. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, London: Sage, 1991; Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983; Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. See more generally, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso Editions and New Left Books, 1983; Ernest Gellner, *Culture, Identity, and Politics*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987; Ernest Gellner, *Encounters with Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1994; John A. Hall, *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

<sup>7</sup> See, J. A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism*, U.S.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982; A. D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, London: Duckworth, 1971; A. D. Smith, *The Ethnic Revival*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981; A. D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, London: Blackwell, 1986; A. D. Smith, *National Identity*, London: Penguin, 1991.

citizenship in the modern state.<sup>8</sup> Added to that a set of theorists, Walker Connor being the leading amongst these, rose to oppose the equation of the nation with the state, national identity with loyalty to the state.<sup>9</sup> He strongly opposes the indiscriminate use of the term 'nation-state', as this was "*designed to describe a territorial-political unit (state) whose borders coincided or nearly coincided with the territorial distribution of a national group. More concisely, it described a situation in which a nation had its own state.*"<sup>10</sup> Alternatively, he defines the state as the political extension of the nation, and in turn defines the nation as a self-aware ethnic group. At the other end of the spectrum, the 'instrumentalist' approaches focuses on the concept of the nation as invented by the state, or more precisely the political elites in order to legitimise their position.<sup>11</sup> Keeping in line with the idea of the artificial nature of the nation, Ernest Gellner<sup>12</sup> connected the creation of nationalism with the need of modern societies for homogeneity. Nationalism, Gellner argued, is a product of the transition from 'agro-literate' to industrial societies. Far from industrialisation itself, nationalism according to Gellner is a product of the following outcomes of industrialisation; the unevenness of industrialisation; the central role of an excluded intelligentsia in the construction of the nation; mass public education; and the discrepancy between the romantic aspirations of nationalists and the real outcomes. Moreover, Benedict Anderson regards the modern nation as an artefact, 'an imagined political community' defined in terms of its style of imagination.<sup>13</sup>

The main logic behind this sort of debate could be traced, according to some theorists,<sup>14</sup> to the actual development of the ideology of nationalism. During the nineteenth century, the rapid development of the ideology of nationalism in parts of Western Europe joined culture and politics and unified a country on the grounds of a common loyalty that was on most occasions used as a basis of the struggle against an outside neighbour. Within the context of the state as a

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<sup>8</sup> See, Clifford Geertz, "Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States", in Clifford Geertz (ed.), *Old Societies and New States*.

<sup>9</sup> Walker Connor, "A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group, is a...", in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: A Reader*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, p.p.38-43.

<sup>10</sup> Walker Connor, "A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group, is a...", in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: A Reader*, p.39.

<sup>11</sup> See, Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*; Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*; P. R. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*.

<sup>12</sup> See, Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*; Ernest Gellner, *Culture, Identity, and Politics*; Ernest Gellner, *Encounters with Nationalism*; John A. Hall, *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*.

<sup>13</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

<sup>14</sup> See Daniel Bell, "Ethnicity and Social Change", in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Ethnicity: A Reader*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 140.



political extension of the nation, uniformity and homogeneity are viewed as prerequisites of 'one nation one state'. Similarly, within the context of the state as creator of the 'nation', implicit is the component of a 'forced uniformity' through particular policies of assimilation implemented by the state so as to bring the homogenisation of the population. Consequently within both these contexts, the state is the dominant form of political organisation while too little room has been left for the role ethnic community as a constituent part of the established state.

At the same time, another form of discourse divided the world between the Western European states that in one way or another followed this particular way of state building (either along the lines of 'one nation one state' or as nation constructed by the state) and the states that emerged out of former colonies. Hence, the division between the 'Western European paradigm' and the so-called 'third world' became established. As has been argued,<sup>15</sup> in the age of nationalism within the context of the former states, it is the will of nations that determines the course of events. The nations are presented as products of social and intellectual developments that became crystallised in the age of nationalism. More specifically, as argued, "*in the Western world, in England and in France, in the Netherlands and in Switzerland, in the United States and in the British dominion, the rise of nationalism was a predominantly political occurrence; it was preceded by the formation of the future national state, or, as in the case of the United States, coincided with it. Outside the Western world, in Central and Eastern Europe and in Asia, nationalism arose not only later, but also generally at a more backward stage of social and political development: the frontiers of an existing state and of an existing nationality rarely coincided; nationalism, there, grew in protest against and in conflict with the existing state pattern-not primarily to transform it into people's state, but to redraw the political boundaries in conformity with ethnographic demands.*"<sup>16</sup> Consequently, according to this argument the 'developed world' consists of national states that existed first and foremost as political communities; thus, development in this context becomes synonymous with 'homogeneity' which, in its turn, is founded on the coinciding of the state with the nation. However, this sort of classification ignores the differences in terms of political organisation and population within the Western European states (i.e. whether and how feasible is the comparison between different state structures such as France and Switzerland?). Moreover, it has very

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<sup>15</sup> Hans Kohn, "Western and Eastern Nationalisms", in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: A Reader*, p.p. 163.

<sup>16</sup> Hans Kohn, "Western and Eastern Nationalisms", in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: A Reader*, p.p. 163-164.

limited explanatory power when one deals with states like Britain in which along with the English identity, Scottish and Welsh identities coexist. This approach simply ignores the existence of such identities.

Above all though, this division reproduces the existing stereotypes that present the multi-ethnic societies and states outside the Western European paradigm as 'backward'. According to these theoretical approaches, within the context of the multiethnic states the problem emerges in the very existence of the various ethnic communities, thus the heterogeneous character of the state and the lack of conformity between the nation and the state. However, this is not the approach that this thesis will adopt as it does not address either the Shi'i community or the context of the state in Lebanon. Shi'i identity was constructed neither through the period of the independent State of Lebanon nor the recent warfare. A Shi'i population inhabited the Jabal Amil and the Bekaa for centuries before their eventual inclusion into the State of Lebanon, which occurred as recently as 1943. The treatment of the Shi'i identity so far as the State of Lebanon is concerned, brings within it an inherent danger of statist and stereotypical versions of ethnic identities. For a long period of time the different ethnic communities in what later became the State of Lebanon functioned outside what has been conventionally labeled as a 'state', according to the mainstream historical paradigm of the European state system. Thus, it was not that these identities were constructed by the state. As the case of Shi'i community demonstrates, Shi'i identity pre-existed the state. At a later stage the State of Lebanon was to a large extent built upon the pre-state identities (or ethnic identities) of its populations without substantially eroding them. Consequently, Lebanon seems to belie both the approaches that focus either on the notion of the state that includes one 'nation' viewed as 'self-aware ethnic community' and another one focusing on the notion of the state as substantially constructing one 'nation'. In essence, Lebanon never existed as a 'nation-state'; most importantly it functioned as a state including more than one 'nation' (or self-aware ethnic communities according to Walker Connor).

Consequently, due to this particular historical experience of state building in Lebanon, various 'sub-state' or 'state-like' identities were forged among the population with the consent of the state. To clarify even more, these sub-state identities never had the status of either minorities, or dominant and subjugated identities. These co-existed and were autonomously positioned both vis-à-vis one another as well as vis-à-vis the state. In addition, far from one-dimensional, i.e. confessional affiliations, each of these collective identities represented the overlapping between various forms of attachments depending on the specific context of each

phase. In effect, due to these particularities of the Lebanese State, a set of theories will be used more extensively than others. Hence, due to the lack of a 'national' space in Lebanon that first and foremost defined state institutions, the theoretical approach of 'one nation one state' embodies inherent restrictions and only limited explanatory power. The so-called 'European paradigm' as referred to, throughout the thesis will designate the process of nation formation and nation building imposed by the state. A clarification should be made at this point; after acknowledging the differential traits between the modern European states, a particular form of state formation and state building will be used as a reference point that is closer to the French state paradigm, as presented by Charles Tilly<sup>17</sup> in particular. However, due to the particularities of each of the European states, the thesis sheds light on the existing theories that emerged out the European experience of state formation, rather than on the specific details and particularities of this experience.

Subsequently, the thesis will not reject the established theoretical framework. Rather, it will use it as the starting point to define the Shi'i community of Lebanon. Within this different context, the thesis will contribute to the comprehensive study of ethnic identity, both within and outside the state context. Instead of using the state as the main unit of analysis, the thesis will focus on ethnic identity as a broad category of religious, tribal, family, old and new allegiances, co-existing with each other and defining Shi'i collective identity. Hence, the thesis builds four different historical, social and political contexts that determine the main components of Shi'i identity, thus demonstrating continuity through change. The main intention is the evaluation of the theory on the basis of contextualisation of Shi'i identity. This is so because we cannot really interpret general rules until we are aware of the particular context in which various theoretical formulations could or could not be applied. Second, as the thesis proves no theoretical principles are completely fixed in advance; on the contrary, they are in an ongoing process of change and reformulation depending on the particular context they address.<sup>18</sup>

The mainstream study of the Lebanese conflict and its causes had shed light on the State of Lebanon first and foremost and then on the different communities that were encompassed in it. Thus, most of the studies reproduced a 'statist' version of the political reality in Lebanon, in the sense that ethnic identity/ ethnic community was studied only so far as the state of Lebanon was concerned. Much has been said from this perspective. The original contribution of this

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<sup>17</sup> Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States, Ad 990-1992*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990.

<sup>18</sup> For an elaborated analysis on the advantages of contextualisation, see, Joseph H. Carens, *Culture, Citizenship and Community: A Contextual Exploration of Justice as Evenhandedness*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

study is to move beyond these conventional constructs and distinctions so as to offer a different perspective. Consequently, the thesis does not focus on the State of Lebanon in relation to the Shi'i community. It attempts a twofold re-focus; first, in the model presented throughout the thesis, it is the particular context according to which the conventional theories of ethnicity and nationalism are re-evaluated. Consequently the thesis transfers attention from theory to context first, and second from state to community. Out of the particular context of the Shi'i identity/Shi'i community, the structure of the pre-state, pre-war, war and post-war political reality of what is now known as Lebanon is being assessed. The combination of both perspectives allows for a more comprehensive understanding of identity creation and recreation throughout these different stages.

These contexts are not treated in isolation from the each other; rather, each of these contexts interacts with the rest. Thus, warfare in Lebanon is but one context within which Shi'i identity is understood. In order to comprehend the dynamics of Shi'i identity within the context of war one should link it to the previous pre-state and state contexts of that identity. The main contribution of the thesis is the study of Shi'i community in Lebanon in its historical continuity. It treats Shi'i identity as a comprehensive system of overlapping attachments some of which change overtime, while others are maintained throughout the four different contexts presented in the thesis. Hence, the originality of the thesis is the premium attention paid to the historical contextualisation of the Shi'i identity and the subsequent linkage of both historical and political spheres as main determinants of collective identities. It therefore argues that the first historical context of Shi'i religious, local, old and new allegiances, to a great measure, determines Shi'i post-independence, war and post-war political identity. In effect, the historical context should be treated as the core on which the following contexts could draw.

The model presented in the thesis diverges from the mainstream model of identities constructed out of ultimate state authority. Within this model, ethnic identity is a dynamic variable, as it is forged and functions quite similarly to the conventional notion of national identity. Thus, out of the analysis of Shi'i identity, useful inferences will be derived, concerning the State of Lebanon throughout the different stages of its development. From a theoretical point of view, the main contribution of the thesis is sought in the argument it builds in the core of the thesis (chapters 3-6); that in effect, state authority is neither exclusive nor granted. There are other entities, such as communal, class and military organisations, which can perform the roles, perceived so far as state prerogatives. In addition, these entities acquire the authority to forge allegiances to the population of a given state rather similar to the allegiances



forged by state authority. Consequently, the thesis will demonstrate the fact that the historical experience of state formation and state building in Lebanon was, to a great measure, different from the mainstream European paradigm. In distinction from this pattern, state formation, warfare and state reconstruction in Lebanon revealed the same old channels of authority and the overlapping sources of identification, which were apparent in the pre-state period. These particular components went on reaffirming themselves, under different guises, within the state, warfare and post-war contexts of the most recent period.

### *Methodology of Research*

At the level of research, the thesis was completed after a long period of intensive bibliographical research, based on English and French material. A serious lack of sources was noticed on the role of the Shi'i community in the pre-state context, and the Ottoman and the Mandate contexts in particular. As mentioned, there were some gaps in the existing literature as far as the role of the Shi'i religion within the local contexts of the Ottoman Jabal Amil and the Bekaa. The mainstream bibliography on the Shi'i community deals a lot with the Shi'i community and the way Shi'i myths and symbols were interpreted within the context of the state in Lebanon and the recent warfare.<sup>19</sup> With a few exceptions<sup>20</sup>, missing in most of these works is the central context of the Shi'i religion and the way this was interpreted within the local contexts of the pre-state Jabal Amil and Bekaa.

Particularly striking was the serious lack of reference to the Shi'i community in various historical accounts on Lebanon.<sup>21</sup> In these accounts, the role of the Shi'i community was

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<sup>19</sup> See, Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance*; Salim Nasr, "Mobilisation Communautaire et Symbolique Religieuse: L'Imam Sadr et les Chi'ites du Liban (1970-1975)"; Salim Nasr, "Roots of the Shi'i Movement"; Salim Nasr, "L'Islam Politique et l'État Libanais (1920-1975)"; Elizabeth Picard, "Political Identities and Communal Identities: Shifting Mobilization Among the Lebanese Shi'a Through Ten Years of War, 1975-1985"; Elizabeth Picard, *The Lebanese Shi'a and Political Violence*; Tom S. J. Sicking, and Dr. Shereen Khairallah. *The Shi'a Awakening in Lebanon: A Search For Radical Change in a Traditional Way*.

<sup>20</sup> See, Fuad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr & the Shia of Lebanon*; Waddah Charara, *Transformations d'une Manifestation Religieuse dans un Village du Liban-Sud (Ashura)*, Beirut : Université Libanaise, Institut des Sciences Sociales, Centre de Recherches, 1968; Souha Taraf-Najib, *Zrariye, Village Chiite du Liban-Sud: de 1900 á nos jours*, Beirut : Les Cahiers du CERMOC, no.4, 1994.

<sup>21</sup> Even though significant historical works on Lebanon, the following sources make a rough reference, if any, to the Shi'i community. Leonard Binder (ed.), *Politics in Lebanon*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1966; Iliya Harik, *Politics and Change in a Traditional Society: Lebanon 1711-1845*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968; Philip K. Hitti, *Lebanon in History: From the Earliest Times to the*

limited to its marginality on the grounds of religion and the old split between the Shi'ites and the Sunni Ottomans. Moreover, too little, if any, reference has been made to the involvement of the Shi'i community in the civil wars of 1840s and 1860s in Mount Lebanon. The Shi'i strongholds of Jabal Amil and Bekaa were indeed quite marginal compared with Mount Lebanon. However, the gravity of these wars as well as their extension up to Damascus can not help but raise questions about the Shi'i involvement in these, as both Jabal Amil and the Bekaa were regions adjacent and closely affiliated with the Syrian interior. Consequently, the research had to move beyond the mainstream accounts so as to establish the specific socio-economic and political context of the Shi'i areas. Particular attention was paid to the local sources of authority in these areas, their relationship with both the central Ottoman authority and the *Emirs* of Mount Lebanon; the socio-economic organisation/structures of the Shi'i areas vis-à-vis Mount Lebanon, as well as the prevailing socio-economic and political position of the Shi'i population residing there.<sup>22</sup>

In order to deal with these sorts of problems, fieldwork research in Lebanon was undertaken. This research was planned to counterbalance both the lack of Arabic sources and the serious absence of details crucial for a sufficient analysis of the Shi'i pre-state identity. The research

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*Present*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1957; Philip K. Hitti, *A Short History of Lebanon*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965; Albert Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon*, London: Oxford University Press, 1946; Malcolm H. Kerr, *Lebanon in the Last Years of Feudalism, 1840-1868*, Beirut: Catholic Press, 1959; Samir Khalaf, *Persistence and Change in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Lebanon: A Sociological Essay*, Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1979; Stephen H. Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate*, London: Oxford University Press, 1968; Kamal Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, New York: Caravan, 1996; Nicola A. Ziadeh, *Syria and Lebanon*, New York: Praeger, 1957. Important exceptions are the following sources; Nazih N. Ayubi, *Over-stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1995; Leila Fawaz, Tarazi, *An Occasion For War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1994; David Gilmour, *Lebanon: The Fractured Country*, London: Blackwell, 1983; Theodor Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Emergence of a Nation*, London: Centre for Lebanese Studies & I. B. Tauris, 1993; William Harris, *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions*, Princeton: Wiener Publishers, 1997; Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1988; David Smock & Audrey Smock, *The Politics of Pluralism: A Comparative Study of Lebanon and Ghana*, New York: Elsevier, 1975.

<sup>22</sup> Important contributions to this direction were the following works: Ismail L. Adel, *Documents Diplomatiques et Consulaires Relatifs à L'Histoire du Liban*, Beirut : Éditions Des œuvres Politiques et Historiques, 1977; Fuad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr & the Shia of Lebanon*; Evelyn Aleene Early, *The Amiliyya Society of Beirut: A Case Study of an Emerging Urban Za'im*, Master's Thesis, Beirut: The American University of Beirut, 1978; Ali-Khazen El Amin, *The Shi'ites of Lebanon*, Doctoral Thesis, Lancaster University, 1973; Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion For War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860*; Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community*; Mishaqa, Mikhayil. *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage, and Plunder: The History of the Lebanon in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, translated from the Arabic by Wheeler M. Thackston, Jr., Albany: State of University of New York Press, c1988; Mounzer, Jaber, *Pouvoir et Société dans le Jabal Amel de 1740 à 1920 dans la Conscience des Chronieurs Chiïtes et dans an Essai d'Interprétation*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Paris, 1978; Taraf-Najib, Souha, *Zrariye, Village Chiïte du Liban-Sud: de 1900 à nos jours*, Beirut : Les Cahiers du CERMOC, no.4, 1994.



was organised into two parts; first, bibliographical and archival research; second and most important, collection of primary sources out of a series of interviews with political actors, journalists and academics.<sup>23</sup> Above all, though, the fieldwork in Lebanon filled the research with the simplest and most significant experience of all; the contact with various common Lebanese people and their contribution to the main themes of the thesis; that neither the limited boundaries of secondary sources nor, language barriers could account for.

Nevertheless, there are still some unavoidable weaknesses which are acknowledged. First, there is a gap in the resources used for this study. Moreover, highly dependent on political elites, the analysis may miss, at points, the local perspective of the Shi'i mass population. One way out of this impasse was found with the use of secondary resources so as to illustrate the local and more intimate perspective. Another potential shortcoming of the thesis is its main preoccupation with theories of Western European origin at the expense of the Islamic theories of state. In terms of these two potential criticisms, some important clarifications need to be made. First, the factor of time and the eventual exhaustion of the material resources could be accounted partly for the considerable practical restrictions, set in the conduct of the research. Second, rather less than moving between different disciplines, the main perspective of the thesis is the political scientist's perspective. In addition, a set of interdisciplinary terms is used throughout the thesis. As a social anthropologist would probe much more profoundly in the local sphere and a sociologist would deal with the very nature of the social structures themselves, the present thesis deals with the political domain, meaning state structures, institutions and political leadership; in effect, the local and social domains are important as long as they bear a relevance to the particular political domain and the specific scope of the thesis.

However, an important compensation for these weaknesses would be an elaborated methodological clarification of the various analytical terms used and the delineation of the general domain in which the thesis falls. First, the use of concepts such as family, tribal, class and communal affiliations goes hand in hand with the main argument regarding ethnic identity; depending on the particular context, a synthesis of overlapping allegiances define Shi'i collective identity through time and space. Thus, as the socio-political contexts change, new points of identification draw new identity boundaries. In effect the thesis focus on the meeting

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<sup>23</sup> Important informants in Lebanon included the following; Hussein Husseini, Habib Sadik, Waddah Charara, Ali Fayyad, Wajih Kawthrani, Sadreddin al-Sadr, Muhammad AbdelHamid Beydoun, Aly Hamdan. See the list of informants at the bibliographical section.

point between the social and the political domain. Ethnicity can be viewed as a political concept, defining the relationship between the state and the various communities encompassed in its structure. Also at another level, there is a particular linkage between state and society so that neither of these two domains is self-contained.<sup>24</sup>

Consequently, the concept of tribe will be used as a reference point of identity. Generally speaking, the tribe is used to express a 'myth of common ancestry' and define a localised group organised on the basis of kinship. However the thesis will deal with the political structures of the tribe, represented by intermediate channels of power that relate directly with the central authority.<sup>25</sup> The thesis will deal with the political organisation of the tribe on the grounds of the particular relations to authority and the type of political organisation both inside and outside the state context; the way in which tribes and tribal modes of political behaviour influence the collective Shi'i organisation.<sup>26</sup> A specification should be made at this point; ethnic identity in Lebanon is not articulated unilaterally along sectarian lines, as most of the time each sectarian group is splintered into various dominant families each possessing autonomous political power. The process of state formation led to the eventual uprooting of the traditional forms of tribal authority and the erosion of old tribal allegiances. However, new channels of authority, new groups and movements emerged, retaining certain tribal characteristics that were in turn shaped by other new factors.<sup>27</sup>

One of these new factors is class, defined as a social group that encompasses individuals who occupy similar positions vis-à-vis the means of production.<sup>28</sup> In the context of the thesis, the term class will be used to underline the way in which Shi'i political organisation is modified under the impact of changing socio-economic circumstances. As a constituent part of change, capitalism signifies the transition from rural to market economies. The thesis focuses on the political implications of capitalism; the effects of the changing modes of production on the existing channels of authority. Moreover modernisation, as another component of change, signifies shifting modes of production and social relations. The thesis however, probes into the

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<sup>24</sup> See, John Breuilly, "The Source of Nationalist Ideology", in John Hutchinson & Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: A Reader*.

<sup>25</sup> See Philip S. Khoury & Joseph Kostiner, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1990, p.3.

<sup>26</sup> On this use of tribe, see, Abner Cohen, "Ethnicity and Politics: the Informal Nature of Political Ethnicity", in John Hutchinson & Anthony D. Smith, *Ethnicity: A Reader*; see also, Philip S. Khoury & Joseph Kostiner, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, p.5.

<sup>27</sup> Philip S. Khoury & Joseph Kostiner, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, p.5

<sup>28</sup> See Nazih N. Ayubi, *Over-Stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*, p. 34.

political implications of these changes; the socio-economic marginalisation of particular groups; the way in which the classic division between 'dominant' and 'exploited' groups can serve as a premise for ethnic communities in their attempt to address changes in their political systems. In effect, the thesis elaborates on the way in which socio-economic claims are expressed in political terms so as to mobilise communal groups; the thesis explores the fusion between class, communal and tribal attachments. In the context of the factors that intervene to shape the effects of the processes of change, ideology will be explored as reflecting the existing social and political conditions; hence, ideology is presented as highly malleable and flexible, able to change meanings in the light of different circumstances.<sup>29</sup> However, far less than focusing on the economist strategies that follow the transition to capitalist mode of production, the thesis deals with the conjunction between the changing social conditions of the community, brought up by capitalism and the way in which these affect the appeal of ideology and authority. Thus finally within the Shi'i context, had the social conditions of the community remained unchanged, it would have been questionable whether ideology and the new elites would have had the same appeal.

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<sup>29</sup> See Nazih N. Ayubi, *Over-Stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*, p. 28.

## *Presentation of the main themes*

### *History as a Component of Political Identity*

Within the context of the thesis, history and within it religion, as a part of Shi'i collective 'historical' identity will not be simply presented as a definite mould of events. It is not about historical events per se, but the analysis focuses on the representation of history in the communal imagery; and this implies a process of modification and transformation through different historical and socio-political contexts. Hence, the thesis highlights the way historical events, carried throughout different historical and political contexts, are re-interpreted so as to articulate new political realities. Consequently, history as will be presented in the first part of the thesis is not simply a process of tracing back the religious origins of Shi'i community and its historical experience within what later came to constitute the State of Lebanon. The analysis of what could conventionally be labeled as 'formation' will cover historical events as the core on which the subsequent periods of state formation, state building, state destruction and state reconstruction could draw. It is on this form of historical experience that the thesis, at a subsequent stage, builds the main argument.

In effect, given the fact that ethnic identity is reconstructed under particular interactional, historical, social and political circumstances, history as an integral part of ethnic identity is interpreted into particular social and political experiences. Far from focusing on history per se, the first part of the thesis will focus on the representation of history; thus the re-enactment of historical myths and symbols and the different meaning they take in the light of the changing socio-political contexts. Hence, representation derives its repetitive meaning by presenting events that existed before, and "*in constructing signs of collective identity, people not only preserve the identity they represent, they also bind themselves and that identity--to the images that signify it.*"<sup>30</sup> The situational and changing nature of identity however, is sought in the different meaning attached to both the represented and the notion of representation itself. Identity, as presented in the thesis, is articulated in continuity through change. Moreover, representation indicates "*an act of authority... of the representative over that which is*

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<sup>30</sup> Anne Norton, *Reflections on Political Identity*, Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993, p. 97.

*represented, and on the primacy of word.*"<sup>31</sup> Hence, an implicit component of the act of recollection is that it is selective and subjective. What matters then, is to seek the underlying meaning and the great emotional potential the representative as a group member derives from the re-enactment of the myth.

Within this context, myths and symbols are viewed as outstanding perceptions, including a set of shared sentiments. They are highly attitudinal, in the sense that they mainly exist in the minds of members, setting the boundaries for ethnic identification. Communal ideas function as a bridge between both concepts of 'real' and 'imagined' history, in that myths are constructed as a response to 'real' events and they can adjust to different socio-political settings. Thus, what is important is the context within which they are constructed and the different contexts within which they evolve. Especially within the latter contexts, myths and symbols take a multi-accentual character.<sup>32</sup> This means that myths and symbols as constituent parts of religious ideologies do not have a single and unilateral meaning, but articulate a repertoire of meanings, depending on the context.

Thus, myths and symbols are constructed out of the exigencies of social and political interaction. They signify meaning made out of both 'imaginary' convergence and divergence. In essence, even contrast and difference " *...provide points of reference and sets of linear relations which, when placed in relation to one another, construct those networks of meaning that cultures comprise.*"<sup>33</sup> Myths and symbols are the means, through the invocation of which individuals think and speak of themselves as 'members', identify themselves with regard to their fellow members who are 'like them' while at the same time they differentiate themselves from people who are 'unlike them'.<sup>34</sup> Though viewed under the prism of interaction, they do not always persist as 'imaginary' constructs but they could be transformed into reality. As identity is perceived as an outcome of communication, what can be argued is that we cannot always create communities and ascribe them properties only by the mere act of imagining them. The notions of 'self' as member and the 'other' as non-member interact within the same social context. In effect, rather than an abstract and monolithic view of the 'other' as stranger,

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<sup>31</sup> Anne Norton, *Reflections on Political Identity*, p. 98.

<sup>32</sup> On the multi-accentual nature of religious ideologies, see S. Hall, "Religious Ideologies and Social Movements in Jamaica", in Boccock Robert and Kenneth Thompson (eds.), *Religion and Ideology: A Reader*, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1985, p. 293.

<sup>33</sup> Anne Norton, *Reflections on Political Identity*, p.3.

<sup>34</sup> See, Glenn Bowman "A 'Country of Words': Conceiving the Palestinian Nation from the position of Exile", in Ernesto Laclau (ed.), *The Making of Political Identities*, London: Verso, 1994, p.140.



there has to be a concrete and clear perception of the 'self' as member of the group compared with the 'other.'<sup>35</sup>

Within the context of myth, the reference to the past is a way in which historical narratives are formalised and ritualised, constructed and disseminated in order to give meaning to present practices, rendering ethnic identity an 'invented tradition.' Moreover history is perceived as a dynamic component of ethnic identity, as it signifies the particular political processes and developments, rendering ethnic identity a political construct. Far from determining the political process, ethnic identity emerges out of, and is inseparable from the political context, providing individuals "... with a sense of a distinct political boundary between themselves and others."<sup>36</sup>

Consequently, the first part of the thesis builds on a contextualisation of ethnic identity. The first chapter of the thesis demonstrates the fact that formation of religious identity is sought in the construction and articulation of religious myths and symbols as an exigency of particular social, historical and political circumstances. Hence, Shi'i religious myths and symbols were constructed so as to articulate the changing nature of both the Islamic balance of political power and the wider social context; in this way, Shi'i myths and symbols were informed by this particular social and political context. Nevertheless once they were constructed, they did not take a definite form as they were, and still are, in a continuous process of change. In essence, at this stage religious formation is rearranged, dislocated and repositioned so as to articulate new historical realities. Within the particular contexts of Jabal Amil and Bekaa, the multi-accentual character of myths and symbols and thus history will be demonstrated. In both these contexts, Shi'i myths and symbols are re-invented so as to adjust to the particular historical and socio-political experiences of the Shi'i communities in these two contexts. Thus, Shi'i identity emerges out of complementary and overlapping religious, local and kinship loyalties. At a next stage, throughout the changing context of the late Ottoman period, as will be presented in the second chapter of the thesis, Shi'i identity is linked to broad foci of identification, such as Arabism and Ottomanism, in close interaction with other regional and local allegiances. It is all these various loyalties that simultaneously constitute parts of the Shi'i identity. In effect, the process of identity recreation is illustrated as new components emerge to build on the prior

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<sup>35</sup> Frederik Barth, "Enduring and Emerging Issues in the Analysis of Ethnicity", in H. Vermeulen & C. Govers (eds.), *The Anthropology of Ethnicity: Beyond 'Ethnic groups and Boundaries'*, Amsterdam: Spinhuis, 1994, p.13.

<sup>36</sup> Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*, U. K.: Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 107.



forms of identity; old historical myths are informed by the changing social and political context of the late Ottoman period, so that old and new loyalties constitute a synthesis of Shi'i identity.

### *Ethnic and National Boundaries Redefined*

Using the established theoretical context of state formation and state building attached to the European tradition, the thesis sheds light upon the processes of state building, within the context of the states that emerged out of previous empires and colonies, Lebanon being one amongst these. Rather than treating the state as the main unit of analysis, the thesis focuses on ethnic community as a part of an established state, through the lenses of which the role and the practices of the state itself will be evaluated. Within such a context, as is argued, 'national' identity is neither exclusive nor granted. In the case of multi-ethnic societies such as that of Lebanon, the state was formed and shaped out of a historical experience in many respects different from the established European model. Instead of dealing with a case of a state that clearly bridges all the various segments of the population, in Lebanon what accounts more than 'national citizenship', is the membership to the ethnic community, defined in terms of religion, i.e. communal identity. Whether we like it or not, within such a context, it is ethnic and not 'national' identity that determines the limits as well as the capabilities of state authority itself. Nevertheless, the effects of ethnic identity on state authority are not defined unilaterally, but in close interaction with state capabilities.

Within the traditional European context, the state gradually built its legitimacy upon a whole network of regularised systems that the Europeans now take as given.<sup>37</sup> The process of standardisation and assimilation, carried within the national role of the state, brought the inevitability of heterogenisation among states. Consequently, at this stage national symbols became formed and standardised, while national identity became the core attachment of the population to a given state, mobilised every time the rulers ventured to conquer another state. As state authority throughout Europe became established, via international agreements, the territorial notion of national identity within well-defined boundaries became the norm, less liable to change.

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<sup>37</sup> As Charles Tilly argues, at that stage, "the European states began to monitor industrial conflict and working conditions, install and regulate national systems of education, organise aid to poor and disabled, build and maintain communication lines, impose tariffs for the benefit of home industries, and the thousand other activities Europeans now take for granted as attributes of state power." Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*, p. 115.

Thus, the notion of nation building became synonymous with the process of “*formation and establishment of the new state itself as a political entity, and the process of creating viable degrees of unity, adaptation, achievement, and a sense of national identity among the people.*”<sup>38</sup> The end product of this process was the construction of the state as the first political organisation, within which the nation, or community of unity, was to be constructed. The process of nation building became attached to the enhancement and strengthening of state capabilities. The latter function was implemented through the acquisition by the state of sufficient social control; that is, the “*subordination of people’s own inclinations of social behavior or behavior sought by other social organisations in favor of the behavior prescribed by state rules.*”<sup>39</sup> In this way, the state became the overarching authority, capable of incorporating into, and when needed, of mobilising popular support around its main institutions. Social control was mainly achieved by means of compliance, participation and legitimacy, interacting with each other while determining the state’s capability for exercising effective social control. First, the state managed to control the distribution of a broad scope of resources, while asserting its demands for compliance from its population. Second, it managed to secure the participation of the population in state-controlled institutions. Third, the affirmation of the state’s legitimacy meant “*the acceptance of the state symbolic configuration within which the rewards and sanctions are packaged. It indicates people’s approval of the state’s desired social order through their acceptance of the state’s myths.*”<sup>40</sup> In essence, the whole notion of the nation-state was evolved in the self-awareness of its citizens.<sup>41</sup>

Hence, ‘nations’ are perceived as more or less given entities, possessing a set of components, such as the territorial boundaries, the legal rights and duties ascribed to the citizens, binding the given population. The notion of citizenship bridges all these components; most important though, this notion is realised through the perception of a given population themselves as bound to a specific territory, as well as being agents of legal rights and duties; thus, active participants in both a given society and polity. The perception that the population holds of its ‘solidarity of citizenship’, the common historical myths and memories, constituting a common

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<sup>38</sup> William Bloom, *Personal Identity, National identity and International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.55.

<sup>39</sup> Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State Capabilities in the Third World*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988, p. 22.

<sup>40</sup> Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State Capabilities in the Third World*, p. 33.

<sup>41</sup> As William Bloom points out, the self-awareness of state’s citizens is revealed, “the legitimacy of the demands which the national state makes upon the men in the mass; their acceptance of the nation as the community which makes the nearest approach to embracing all aspects of their lives.” William Bloom, *Personal Identity, National identity and International Relations*, p. 56.

‘civic religion’, signifies the population as distinct citizens of a given nation-state. Consequently, identity partly emerges as a product of the imagery; the image of a nation thus creates a national reality.<sup>42</sup> The members of a nation perceive it as a whole, by referring to the image they have construed in their minds. The internal congruence between their perceptions as citizens and their polity assures the unrestricted existence of their nation itself.

Within this theoretical context, the main argument of the thesis will be constructed as follows. Within different historical and socio-political contexts, what is supposed to be the ‘nation-state’ is built upon a different experience. Rather than the supreme authority, existing above and beyond any other attachment of the subject population, the state represents the wider context within which overlapping identities co-exist. Within this context, rather than the narrow sense of a collective name, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, common culture and a sense of solidarity, ethnic identity is presented in a more dynamic form; one adjusted to different contexts and expressed in continuity through change. Thus the experience that the same community enjoys within different socio-political settings, leads the same group to recreate its own culture system so as to embrace change and adjust itself to the social and political situation it is found in. Less than reproduction of ethnic identity, this process of change implies a reconstruction of ethnic identity, a construction of a new one. As identity is changeable and socially constructed, people can claim multiple and complementary identities. As ethnic identity contains multiple components, these could vary over time with some eventually disappearing and others newly emerging.

Consequently, this nature of ethnic identity not only signifies the particular dynamism of the ethnic community itself, but determines, to a great extent, its interaction with the nation-state and national identity. Hence as the argument goes, the nation-state is an undoubtedly major political player, on the one hand; on the other hand, it is not the only one, as “*other political entities are capable of choice and innovation.*”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> This notion of identity is defined in close conformity with what Benedict Anderson defines as “an imagined political community-and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear them, yet in the minds of each lives an image of their community.” Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 6.

<sup>43</sup> Cynthia H. Enloe, *Ethnic Conflict and Political Development*, Boston: Little, Brown And Company, 1973, p. 11.

The interaction between the nation-state and ethnic community, national identity and ethnic identity, is significant, in that it determines the limits of development for both the ethnic group and the nation-state. This is because both the ethnic communities and 'nations' are dynamic, their economic and political character can and do change, and changes within ethnic groups can induce subsequent changes to the state institutions, as well as the other way round. Most important though, the thesis demonstrates the fact that in a similar way to the nation-state, ethnic communities can distribute a broad scope of resources. In addition, ethnic communities can induce some sort of compliance from the members; they can create their own institutions and stir the participation of the population in these, as well as secure members' approval of the communal social order through the acceptance of communal myths. In this way, less than given, the main attributes of modern nations are not prescribed as an exclusive national prerogative and, as Ernest Gellner argued, even *"will and consent, is not an exclusive characteristic of modern nations. Many utterly un-national groups or collectivities have persisted by consent. Amongst the wide variety of kinds of community or collectivity, which has existed throughout history, consent, coercion, and inertia have co-existed in varying proportions. Modern states have no monopoly of consent, and they are no strangers to inertia and coercion either."*<sup>44</sup>

Consequently, the second part of the thesis defines the identities constructed out of state formation and state building in Lebanon. As presented in the third chapter of the thesis, in Lebanon, instead of the state forging a collective notion of national citizenship, the community is elevated to the status of the state. The ethnic community is elevated to the status of the main distributor of rights and duties for the population, offering leadership, which is in effect communally or family based, rather than national. From state formation and state building, through state disintegration and warfare, to state reconstruction in the aftermath of warfare, the main historical components of communal identity are present in varying degrees and under various guises, so that Shi'i identity is articulated through continuity and change. The representation of these points further links the population to the communal and local networks of identification, while alienating it from the notion of the state as an enforcer of national consciousness. What is compared, in effect, is the nation-state and the ethnic community, national and ethnic identities, but through the role of the community itself from which useful inferences will be deducted. The latter inferences concern the established notions of

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<sup>44</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Culture, Identity, and Politics*, p.p. 8-9.



mobilisation of the population around state institutions, hence state legitimacy, state making and war making, as well as state reconstruction in the aftermath of civil warfare.

### *Drawing the Boundaries between National and Communal Mobilisation*

As ethnic community is the same dynamic concept as the nation-state, under particular circumstances, it can induce a form of political mobilisation, similar to national mobilisation, that is mobilisation around the nation-state and its insignia. This is what the thesis intends to prove; that, in effect, the way an ethnic community becomes mobilised around ideologies, communal leaders and a communal organisation is determined by, as well as indicative of, the actual nature of the state authority itself. At a subsequent stage, it is communal mobilisation that has a direct effect on the legitimisation or not of state structures by the population.

In the European tradition of state building, state legitimacy is linked to three roles traditionally ascribed to the state; first, the distribution of a broad scope of resources, in exchange for the compliance of the population with the state authority; second, the participation of the population in state-controlled institutions; and third, the acceptance of the state's myths by the wider population. Consequently, all the three functions are parts of a gradual process that culminates with the material and emotional linkage of the citizens to the state authority; this is what gives the state the legitimate authority to regulate and control the different aspects of peoples' lives. Thus, state legitimacy is defined as "*the probability that other authorities will act to confirm the decisions of a given authority.*"<sup>45</sup> Within this ideal context of state authority, what defines state legitimacy is the state's capacity to effectively mobilise citizens and resources. Hence, what the process of political mobilisation implies, is the effective capacity of the state in "*channelling people into specialized organizational frameworks that enable state leaders to build stronger armies, collect more taxes, ..., and complete any other number of complicated tasks.*"<sup>46</sup> Through the main state functions, the population becomes aware of state authority and compliant with the state rules.

The extraordinary circumstances, under which an ethnic community becomes ready for political mobilisation, refer to the wider context of desires, goals, perceptions and aspirations of

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<sup>45</sup> Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organised Crime", in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, p.171.

<sup>46</sup> Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State Capabilities in the Third World*, p.p. 21-22.



the communal polity in a transformed context that brings new definitions of ethnic identity;<sup>47</sup> and this is not a state-prerogative. In the same ways that states are capable of coping with change and development, ethnic communities could act likewise. Within the context of change, modernisation is defined as a process of “*rapid transformation of the most fundamental aspects of society and culture*”;<sup>48</sup> modernisation is one of the processes that could induce the political mobilisation of ethnic identity. The liaison between modernisation and ethnic mobilisation is sought in the way social change, entailed in the process of modernisation, brings subsequent political mobilisation.

Change creates a potential for communal mobilisation, in that socio-economic development, coupled with the broadening of communicational networks, can exacerbate the existing cleavages between poor and rich, urban and rural, the elites and the masses, while exerting multiple pressures on communal groups. These factors could lead the members of alienated groups to realise their collective disadvantage, in terms of their material well being or political participation, in comparison with other groups. On the other hand, the dominant groups realise the presence of potential challengers and seek to maintain the existing balance to their benefit. Hence, for both dominant and dominated political actors, power over the state apparatus is a crucial goal.<sup>49</sup>

Nevertheless, change per se does not unilaterally account for the political mobilisation of a given ethnic community. Other factors can capitalise on the effects of modernisation and change so as to bring ethnic mobilisation. First, ideology is one vital factor, as people are more vulnerable to ideologisation in times of great stress, when they attempt to comprehend wide changes that encroach on the systems within which they act and interact with each other. It is then that the new practices are in need of a more elaborate, but most importantly, a public mode of explanation. The problem of an ethnic community, facing a disruption of the prevalent norm of things, is one of definition and interpretation.<sup>50</sup> What amounts to social and political mobilisation, is the way in which the members of a group become aware of the fact that their own ideational systems would not prove adequate to serve their changing purposes, goals and aspirations; and that their goals are not attainable within the existing norms. Hence, ideology

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<sup>47</sup> Cynthia H. Enloe, *Ethnic Conflict and Political Development*, p.p. 9-11.

<sup>48</sup> J. Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics: A Conceptual Framework*, U.S.: Columbia University Press, 1981, p. 39.

<sup>49</sup> J. Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics: A Conceptual Framework*, p. 4.

<sup>50</sup> As it is pointed out, “men respond to the unsettling advances of urbanisation and industrialisation by pursuing new modes of explanation.” Cynthia H. Enloe, *Ethnic Conflict and Political Development*, p. 39.

binds the community together, rendering its claims rationalised, legitimised and politically significant. Under particular circumstances, modernisation and industrialisation can provide the stimuli for action and render ethnic groups more liable to the effect of new ideologies. It is within the context of disruption that these processes bring, that the most disadvantaged groups within a polity identify with these ideologies; mainly as an outlet for social, economic and political grievances, resulting out of changes in the wider society, and the political system.

The encroachment of the capitalist structures of market economies can dislocate significant proportions of a rural population, as these lose the security of land holding. At the same time, 'a crisis in the exercise of power' permitting the further exploitation of the rural populations by traditional overlords, and the creation of new elites, exacerbate the already disequibrated transitional stage. As has been argued, revolutionary situations emerge out of a political fusion between a 'marginal' new elite and the discontented rural populations, "*whom the market created, but for whom society made no adequate provision.*"<sup>51</sup> In essence, a factor relevant to the case of the Shi'ites in Lebanon, is the changes in the communal leadership. Under particular circumstances, these changes stimulate the effective political mobilisation of the ethnic community. In the case of an alienated and excluded community, not having as yet articulated a common goal and self-perception, the continuation of its underprivileged position could reveal the failed legitimacy of the existing elites to meet its needs. Transition and rapid socio-economic changes in deeply divided social settings can lead to an increasing elite vulnerability to pressures coming from alternative elites of political aspirants.

Within this context, the rise of charismatic leadership is anti-structural in the sense that "*it rises in moments when structures are in doubt, unstable, or rejected, and it amends or replace them.*"<sup>52</sup> Within these sorts of structures, leadership could be a key factor in providing an institutional framework for the potential movement, within which an identified discontent can be effectively expressed. The capacity of the organisations themselves to function towards the "*provision of societal value opportunities, political value opportunities, and channels for expressive protest*",<sup>53</sup> determines the success of the institutional pattern in carrying out any concerted action for the dissident groups.

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<sup>51</sup> Eric R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*, New York: Harper and Row, 1969, p.p. 288-289.

<sup>52</sup> Anne Norton, *Reflections on Political Identity*, p. 113.

<sup>53</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970, p. 283.

Moreover, the extent to which individuals are satisfied by an organisation is, in a way, indicative of the extent to which leaders could sustain the compliance and loyalty of their followers.<sup>54</sup> Consequently, through the articulation of alternative doctrines, the leadership creates and extends the dissident institutional support. The effectiveness of the alternative doctrines to mobilise is indicative of the leader's ability to mediate them to followers and potential followers.<sup>55</sup> What accounts for effective communal mobilisation is not the notion of charisma itself, but the validation of it, the recognition and legitimation of the charismatic leader to speak for the community. As the charisma is strictly personal, its validation is a public attribute; the evaluation of the charismatic leader is linked to the collective rather than the individual. Added to that, authority is evaluated according to the patterns of common political culture. Hence, the leader can link himself to mythic and historical models, by means of analogy with the existing historical and political reality. In essence, both the building of solidarity among the followers and legitimacy and representativeness on the part of the leader are closely interrelated.<sup>56</sup> Thus, charismatic authority reveals "*a commutative equation in two parts*"; a sense of identity built between the individual and the community; and another sense, built between the community and the leader.<sup>57</sup>

Consequently, the fourth chapter of the thesis demonstrates the fact that the interaction between change, ideology and leadership, is what determines the pace of political mobilisation. Nevertheless, what defines, first and foremost, the limits and strengths of these processes, is the particular position of the state vis-à-vis the communal authority. At a subsequent stage, the activation of the processes under study, and their effect on ethnic consciousness, reschedule communal boundaries while bringing a different version of state legitimacy to the forefront. Rather than mobilisation of citizens around state institutions, the case of the Shi'i mobilisation indicates an alternative form of mobilisation around class movements and the ideologies these represent. At a next stage, Shi'i community became politically mobilised around communal organisations and institutions. In this second form of mobilisation, communal identity did not uproot the prior class identity. It was rather that the communal mobilisation co-existed with, and encompassed, the prior class allegiances. In both these forms of mobilisation though, both

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<sup>54</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, p.283.

<sup>55</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, p. 291.

<sup>56</sup> This is so because, "the assessment of a charismatic leader according to the recollection of mythic and historic paradigms for leadership effects a recollection of the people themselves; they come together in the subjective consciousness of community created by a common past." Anne Norton, *Reflections on Political Identity*, p. 103.

<sup>57</sup> Anne Norton, *Reflections on Political Identity*, p. 117.

class and communal organisations ran parallel to the state. Hence, far from being taken for granted, what is perceived as state legitimacy, state authority, state myths and the like, are a part of a homogenised venture, which, drawn out of a particular historical experience, of European origin, became established as the ultimate truths. Without rejecting them altogether, the thesis assesses their potential within a different context, brought out of a different historical experience of state formation. What is, in effect argued, is that under particular circumstances and through particular processes, alongside state, other entities, such as ethnic community, could save for themselves the main attributes, perceived as the state prerogatives. Class and communal organisations could induce a form of mobilisation similar to the state-sponsored mobilisation of the citizenry. In the established European contexts, the mobilisation of the citizens around state's myths and symbols is what accounts for state legitimacy. In other contexts though, political mobilisation around class movements and ideologies, communal institutions and communal myths brings the same sort of legitimacy for the respective organisations, either class or communal.

### *State making and War making: Communities as 'State-like' Entities*

What is perceived as state authority is manifested in terms of established, differentiated, autonomous and centralised institutions with control over sufficient resources. It is through these institutions that the state could enforce a sort of 'order' so that, most of the time, control becomes synonymous with 'order', and state making is reified as 'political order'; thus, control traditionally refers to a form of society less inclined to violence. This perception of state authority will be the starting point of the chapter five of the thesis. The chapter in turn will prove that the principle of state sovereignty and state authority, in some cases, is neither exclusive nor granted. Actors can be, and actually are, functioning in the absence of a higher authority, to the extent that they can identify with the roles of what is perceived as 'the state'. Also, warfare in Lebanon uprooted the prior channels of authority and created new ones. However, these new channels of authority went on functioning in very similar ways as the elite of the *zu'ama* did in Ottoman, Mandate and Independent Lebanon.



Within the established historical tradition, states seemed to have emerged out of war making.<sup>58</sup> It was through warfare that the political institutions, entailed within state authority, were constructed and woven into what we now perceive as the state's 'legitimate order'. It was the exigencies of warfare that led the European states to construct formidable coercive apparatuses of their own. The European states gained their legitimacy, first and foremost, through the monopolisation of the means of coercion; and as a first step in achieving that they deprived their subject populations of access to any sort of coercion.<sup>59</sup> Gradually, through this coercive capacity, these states were elevated to the status of the overarching authority vis-à-vis their domestic rivals. In their attempt to establish their predominance, thus to enjoy the benefits of power, these states demarcated their 'buffer zones', as the areas where they wielded coercion and which they sought to protect and secure. To the extent that most of the states functioned along the same logic of warfare, the extension of these 'buffer zones' by one state was regarded as a *casus belli* by a neighbouring one. In this way, warfare not only created internal state structures but also clearly demarcated the boundaries between the 'internal' and 'external' domains of state authority.

State legitimacy became further established with the construction of the first durable institution of the army, while the sustenance of the army as an efficient means for warfare involved the state in other activities. In order to carry out these activities, the state created a broad network of organisations, such as treasuries, supply services, mechanisms for conscription and the like. These institutions would enable the extraction of the necessary resources and, subsequently, the increase of the state's coercive capabilities and the conduct of war. Nevertheless, at a period of extended state capabilities, the states realised, that in order to wage war, they had to secure the acquiescence of the population; they did so by using their coercive capacity to extract all the necessary resources for warfare from the population. In effect, state authority entrenched a wide range of domains and incorporated them into the logic of mobilisation of resources for warfare. Hence, any occasion of war became an occasion for further expansion and consolidation of state authority, with the establishment of further

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<sup>58</sup> This argument is based on the research that Charles Tilly conducted on the main stages of state making in Western Europe. Consequently, while acknowledging the existence of other theoretical approaches on state formation, this chapter will focus on state making and war making as mutually reinforcing ventures.

<sup>59</sup> As it is pointed out, "since the seventeenth century..., the rulers have managed to shift the balance decisively against both individual citizens and rival powerholders within their own states. They have made it criminal, unpopular, and impractical for most of their citizens to bear arms, have outlawed private armies, and have made it seem normal for armed agents of the state to confront unarmed civilians." Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*, p. 69.



political institutions as a means for the extraction of the necessary resources for the conduct of war. In essence, gradually, war making and state making became closely intertwined and mutually reinforcing ventures to the extent that, after a while, they became indistinguishable from one another; both processes led to the same old practices of extraction of resources from the population. The rising demands of warfare enhanced state authority through further extraction, protection and adjudication. With the institutionalisation and standardisation of state control,<sup>60</sup> state legitimacy moved away from raw coercion and towards more implicit ways of exerting authority. Through extraction, protection and adjudication the state controlled distribution, first as a way to ensure the efficient flow of state revenues and then as a response to the demands raised by the citizens. As state-control impinged on wide domains of citizens' rights, a sort of bargaining took effect between the state and its citizens; hence, rights were granted to the citizens in exchange for their compliance with state authority. In this way, a stake was created on the part of the citizens for compliance with state institutions; also, clearer boundaries of state authority were delineated, to the extent that the state is now perceived as the main agent of the established 'order'.

Consequently, different phases of state formation in Europe induced different forms of political organisations. Through the establishment of the relevant myths and symbols, the political leaders legitimised both the prevalent state structures and political players. From the 'dynastic' concept of hereditary rule, based on the outstanding 'divine' nature of monarchy that ruled groups of people defined as 'subjects', under the influence of new forces state authority created the myths of the political community, based on the principles of 'citizenship' and 'nationality'. At a later stage, the concept of 'nation' was constructed to homogenise diverse populations which, at a previous stage, were defined as separate local entities. Hence, through state-sponsored policies of standardisation of education and language, historical myths were promoted as the 'ultimate truths' to, eventually, bring the assimilation of the various groups within the state structure. Therein lies the function of war, in reactivating the internal structure of the state itself, inducing the popular and 'patriotic' sentiments of the population. It may not have been a coincidence that external warfare was conducted when internal problems and local centres of authority undermined the central state power. Within the European state model, war induced a series of policies, such as military service, conscription and propaganda that were

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<sup>60</sup> For more information on the regularisation of state institutions as a result of warfare, see, Hendrik Spruyt, "Institutional Selection in International Relations: State Anarchy as Order", in *International Organisation*, vol. 48, no. 4, Autumn 1994, p.p. 527-57.

used so as to forge a sense of 'national community'; these policies were designed to replace the local communities of the previous stage.<sup>61</sup>

In the European state-paradigm war made the state; however, in the paradigm of warfare in Lebanon, and presumably elsewhere, warfare 'unmade' the state. What is more, warfare led to the replacement of state authority with other entities, such as military organisations; these organisations not only carried out functions traditionally labeled as 'state functions', but, ironically enough, they established a new 'order'. Nevertheless, this new order is very similar to the already established European order. Moving beyond the established notions of state-control and 'order' taken out of the European context of state formation, it seems that the state even within the established European tradition was constructed out of, and evolved institutionally through, violence and coercion.<sup>62</sup> Even if this argument is only half true, then the processes of homogenisation of populations and standardisation of institutions, carried out for the sake of the 'nation-state' formation, could not help but carry with them, either explicitly or implicitly, some seeds of coercion.<sup>63</sup>

In effect, the established states monopolised the means of coercion and shaped a whole new order around this aim. Similarly, the decrease of the state's coercive capabilities can allow for the rise of military organisations. Through continuing warfare, these militias became the main agents of coercion, thus, the premium power-holders within society. Just as the changing demands of warfare shaped differently the course of state making, the changing course of warfare in Lebanon changed the attitudes, objectives, and practices of actors and militias alike, leading to further changes in the course of warfare and vice versa. As warfare took a different course, from class struggle to communal war, the various military organisations were

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<sup>61</sup> On these dimensions of war-making and state-making, see Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p.p. 83-90. See also, Kalevi J. Holsti, *The State, War, and the State of War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.p.41-60.

<sup>62</sup> For more evidence on violence and European state-formation, see, Youssef Cihen, Brian R. Brown, A. F.K. Organski, "The Paradoxical Nature of State Making: The Violent Creation of Order", in *The American Science Review*, vol. 75, 1981.

<sup>63</sup> As Michael Humphrey very eloquently points out, "nationalism handed down from the centre has always been problematic, because the violence implicit in its realisation reinforces the cultural identities it seeks to deny. The construction of national myths, an imagined community, national language and institutions are all part of the cultural standardisation of population. Those unable to be incorporated were the potential object of 'denationalisation' through repression, extermination or expulsion." Michael Humphrey, "Civil War, Community and State in the Middle East", in Paul J. White and Williams Logan (eds.) *Remaking the Middle East*, Oxford: Berg, 1977, p. 27. A more or less similar point is made by Cynthia Enloe, when she distinguishes the element of oppression present in most political systems so that, as she argues, we could infer that integration is not attained by socialisation alone; especially in cases "when an ethnic group rises up to challenge national legitimacy, the co-ercive dimension of national politics is blatantly revealed." See Cynthia Enloe, *Ethnic Conflict and Political Development*, p. 12.

transformed into militias, fighting for the establishment of communal legitimacy rather than anything else. Nevertheless, this reinforced the nature of warfare as communal and the further mobilisation of resources towards this end.

When at a later stage warfare changed, the organisation had to face challenges coming from 'internal rivals'. The emergence of alternative poles of communal authority changed the objectives of warfare, from the establishment of communal predominance to the establishment of authority within the organisation. In essence, the extraction of resources for warfare became an ultimate objective for the organisation, in its attempt to deal with its security and survival, whatever the cost. In similar ways to the state, through the strengthening of their extractive capabilities, both Shi'i military organisations, Amal and Hizballah, sought to increase their legitimacy vis-à-vis one another; it is within this logic that they formed alliances with external forces and they constructed their internal political structures. The building up of institutional frameworks led to the same old processes of standardisation of institutions and homogenisation of the population; the latter population became incorporated into the 'buffer zones' of war-torn Lebanon. What is more, the tribal practices, fragmentation and external patronage of the previous pre-state and state contexts were similarly ubiquitous within the context of warfare.

In another context, the state from a position of authority forged the national identities of its citizens. From a similar position of authority, the military organisations in Lebanon induced the sectarian affiliations of the population. As a result of the exigencies of warfare and its rapidly changing nature, sectarian affiliations became even more pronounced than before. The Shi'i population in Lebanon were tied to their respective organisations, either Amal or Hizballah, for the provision of their basic needs for security, protection and socio-economic rewards. Hence, the same logic of bargaining for compliance that penetrated the relationship between the state and its citizens is similarly relevant to the identification of the Shi'i population of Lebanon with the Shi'i militias throughout the fifteen years of war. However, this same logic could refer to the prior channels of authority, the *zu'ama*, and their role as distributors and protectors of the population at the expense of the state.

Moreover, the myths and symbols were adjusted to the various objectives of each Shi'i organisation, throughout the course of warfare. Hence, the military organisation created its own myths and symbols and thus legitimised its own authority. In the established European context, the incorporation of these myths into the formal institutions of the state enabled the citizens to internalise them as their 'national' history. In the context of warfare in Lebanon, the instrumentalisation of these myths by the Shi'i military organisations led to the ultimate

moment when war, while distant from the pure coercive strategies, stirs whole populations to rise up to arms in protection of their 'nation-like' community or adjacent sectarian organisation. All the myths and symbols that represent their collectivised 'national history' are re-invented so as to legitimise the prevalent balance of power. Consequently, even within the context of warfare as will be presented in the chapter, and ironically enough, an implicit 'order' is constructed in the same way that warfare in Europe created the state's established 'order'. In addition throughout the warfare in Lebanon, the military organisations functioned in the same way that the indirect channels of authority, the *zu'ama*, functioned within the Ottoman and the mandate context, as well as the context of the independent state of Lebanon.

### *From War making to State making*

At a final stage, the thesis will end where it started; that is, the different historical experience that each state carries within it throughout the different stages of its development. Within such a context, even civil war and state disintegration is adjusted to the previous historical experience of the state itself. Within the context of the final chapter of the thesis, what is argued is that, as Lebanon was formed out of different historical experience, warfare brought the seeds of this experience and thus, paved the way for a different version of state reconstruction at a subsequent stage.

In the European tradition, what distinguished the stages of warfare and nation building, at first, was the existence of various power-holders, commanding their own military forces. At a next stage, these independent power-holders were incorporated into the state as standing national armies. The process of specialisation, at a later phase, transformed the army into a 'national' army on the basis of recruits taken from the citizenry themselves and with the establishment of state-sponsored distributive and legislative institutions. At a later stage, the process of civilianisation delineated clearer boundaries between the military and the civilian organisations. With the subordination of the military to the civilian, throughout the stage of civilianisation, civilian institutions were constructed to contain the power of the military.<sup>64</sup> In

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<sup>64</sup> Charles Tilly situates the success of the process of civilianisation of government in the following factors; first, the limitation of the military activities of the state, counterbalanced by the development of the civilian economy; second, the increase of expenditure on the non-military activities, contrary to the military expenditure; and third, the outstripping of military expansion by further civilian production. For more details on these processes see, Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*, p.p. 122-126



addition, an organisational division gradually took place, between forces oriented against external rivals and ones focused on internal control.<sup>65</sup> During these last stages, the whole logic of warfare and its impact on state making changed. In the first stage the rulers used warfare as a way to discipline both the internal populations and the internal rivals so as to emerge as the main agents of coercion. At a later phase, from a venture for internal homogenisation, warfare moved towards 'external' homogenisation; that is, the export of the established state system to the rest of the world.

As the state of Lebanon emerged out of this process of 'external' homogenisation, all the various components of its identity did not go automatically; on the contrary, it went on to function along the lines of its past historical experience, which was different from the mainstream paradigm of state formation. Within the context of war, the military organisations functioned similarly to what is perceived as the 'nation-state' but most importantly, they functioned as the state in Lebanon functioned prior to the eruption of war. They became the main agents of coercion in the absence of the state, establishing 'institutions' in their own right. Moreover, these militias became the main distributors of resources to the relevant segments of the population and they constructed identities, as well as communal myths and symbols to enhance their legitimacy. Hence, the military organisations functioned as the main channels of identification and leadership just like the *zu'ama* functioned at a prior stage. They became increasingly reliant on external patrons and were ridden by intense factionalism, similarly to the Ottoman, the colonial and the state-sponsored elites.

Consequently, it seemed that warfare in Lebanon revealed nothing more than this changing nature of warfare itself and the different linkage it bore to state making. In essence, with the evolution of the nation-state, warfare was transformed from an internal to an external venture, as the dominant European states intervened, at times militarily, in nationalist rebellions elsewhere. Thus, external warfare brought the establishment of European-sponsored political systems in the rest of the world. Nevertheless, as state formation in these newly emerged states was to a great extent external, thus different from the European paradigm, it meant to create, both state systems and their constituent parts, i.e. communities, entrenched by the same logic of externality. This was the reality in Lebanon throughout the stages of state construction and state destruction. The same goes with regard to the Shi'i community throughout these stages. The same logic as well permeated the process of state reconstruction in the aftermath of the war. There is nothing inherently faulty in this process of state building; at least this is not dealt

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<sup>65</sup> See, Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*, p.75.



with, in the context of the final chapter or in the context of the thesis. What is in effect treated is the different process of state formation and state building in states that went through experiences different from the established state paradigm.

Post-war state reconstruction in Lebanon, demonstrated the same blurred boundaries between the internal and external sources of state sovereignty of the pre-state and state period. In addition, the main Shi'i military organisations, Amal and Hizballah, were incorporated into the political institutions of the post-war Lebanese state. They did so in similar ways as the prior Ottoman and the Mandate elites, as well the elites of the Independent State of Lebanon were incorporated within the respective political structures. In similar ways to the rational role of the established 'nation-state', when the respective communal organisations in Lebanon sensed the changing nature in the balance of power at their expense, they sought to gain in political might; they were militarily demobilised and incorporated into the state institutions.

Consequently, political bargaining is an implicit component in these arrangements; and this is a common denominator of both the 'nation-state' and the ethnic community, revealing both their flexibility and adjustability. In the case of the 'nation-state', the passing from one stage of warfare to the other and the new inferences this brought to state making was the product of political deliberation rather than anything else. The bargaining of the state rulers with both the dominant classes and the subject population, without the consent of whom it was all the more difficult to embark on warfare ventures, brought the concepts of 'national' interests, 'national' rights and the like to the fore. As modern war ventures became highly dependent on the mobilisation of the populations, they created a stake on the part of the state rulers. Hence, these rulers instilled forms of civic loyalty to the population so as to counterbalance other potential loyalties that may have or may have not endangered their legitimacy.

Thus, not only the elements of 'historical continuity' of the nation-state were based on predominantly pragmatic grounds, but also they were incorporated in the political programmes of either the governments or the ruling elites.<sup>66</sup> In one way or another, what is perceived as 'nationalism' became de facto political; so that patriotism, myths and symbols in the form of flags, civic religions and the like became integrated into the state structures, implying the political continuity of the state as the prevalent organisation within society. As the case of the Shi'i community demonstrates, within the context of nationalism, not necessarily identified with the state, the utilisation of legitimacy or at times the manipulation of the state apparatus

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<sup>66</sup> See, Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p.p. 83-89.

would eventually elevate the political status of a given community.<sup>67</sup> Thus, in both cases the underlying common denominator is the struggle for power and political predominance.

Consequently, the final chapter of the thesis will shed light upon the distinct components of state continuity in the case of Lebanon, revealed in the post-war political developments. What will be highlighted, in effect, will be the different form that the state acquires in historical and political contexts, other than the established ones. Nevertheless, what is argued is that the logic of political continuity seems to link both the established and new paradigms while historical and political experience is what distinguishes the course state formation took in each of these paradigms. Hence, the same components that permeated the pre-war state structures in Lebanon were reflected in the way the Shi'i organisations became incorporated within the state institutions. Finally, these militias were transformed into political communities, struggling for 'political continuity', similarly to the established state, nonetheless adjusted to the particular experience these enjoyed within the State of Lebanon.

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<sup>67</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p. 96.

***PART I***

***Historical Contextualisation of Shi'i Identity***

# ***1. Shi'i Collective Identity: Overlapping Religious and Local Allegiances***

This chapter highlights the particular historical, social and political contexts out of which Shi'i myths and symbols and thus Shi'i religious identity was constructed. The chapter treats Shi'i religious identity as a socio-political construct and one amongst other sources of identification. Far from monolithic and one-dimensional source of identification, Shi'i religious identity in the contexts of Jabal Amil and Bekaa is in close interaction with the particular historical, social and political experiences of the Shi'i populations in both these contexts. Hence religious identity is re-constructed so as to adjust to these local contexts and to articulate the local foci of identification. The main argument is that both religious and local allegiances substantially overlap and define the collective identity of the Shi'i population of Jabal Amil and Bekaa.

## ***1.1 Jihad and the Construction of Islamic State***

With the advent of Islam, warfare became the main vehicle for the establishment of the Islamic order.<sup>1</sup> It was through warfare that the state would become capable of performing its main functions and thus powerful enough to re-affirm its authority.<sup>2</sup> The early conquests created an

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<sup>1</sup> In the period prior to the advent of Islam the prevalent social organisation was based on a nomadic mode of production that defined relations of kinship. Within such a system, the power relations were unchanged in terms of their overall structure; this means that even though modifications in political power did occur, the new groups rose to power and accommodated themselves in the same framework without, most of the times, seeking to introduce a new social system. Consequently, within such a system, political power was exercised on the basis of group solidarity, which signified domination as well as ascribed privileges and wealth. Internal solidarity became the main source of power for the tribe on the one hand; on the other, each tribal group was positioned against the other tribes on the basis of external antagonistic relations. Hence, warfare was conducted for the sustenance and dominance of each tribe vis-à-vis the rest. The main objectives of tribal warfare and conquest were the acquisition of water and pastoral resources, as well as the re-arrangement of the ranking order whereas the dominant tribes would collect a form of a 'status' tax imposed on the militarily weaker tribes. For more details on the pre-Islamic socio-political order, see, Nazih Ayubi, *Over-Stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*, p.p. 52-55.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the first Islamic period, the process of warfare revealed the existence of two socio-political orders, the prior nomadic and the new Islamic one, in conflict with each other. Since the death of the Prophet the rulers who succeeded him, having acknowledged the great challenges posed by the old elite of nomadic leaders, conducted warfare in order to affirm their authority and at the same time activate the process of Islamisation of the state apparatus. Rather than extinct, the prior system continued to reaffirm

incentive for the formation of an army through which the conquerors could exercise their authority. At a later stage, the army became institutionalised as a part of the state itself, with the distribution of the spoils of war amongst those fighters who offered the most and best services to the cause of Islam. This process of distribution established the role of the state as a more comprehensive economic and political unit. Hence, the state became the main agent of an economy built upon the imposition of a variety of taxes. In addition, the state became the sole agent, improvising and institutionalising different means of tax extortion.

In the aftermath of Muhammad's death, far from being fixed, the new order of Islam was in a continuous process of transformation with the integration of the former tribal, nomadic social formations into the new social system under the auspices of the Islamic *umma*. Warfare for the cause of Islam became the main source of communal protection from threats coming from either real or perceived unbelievers, existing outside the bounds of the community. Less than an individual obligation, *jihad* became a source of communal strength; and the duty of the community was to provide fighters ready to sacrifice their own lives in the name of Islam. This notion of *jihad* shaped the *umma*, the Islamic community, with the establishment of shared rituals linking the members with the community. Gradually, a set of obligations that defined the true believers and members of the *umma* was formulated in the pillars of Islam.<sup>3</sup>

Each form of Islamic State, from the Umayyad *Caliphate* to the Abbasid State, was increasingly dependent upon the construction of a high culture, based on the adjustment and re-adjustment of the Islamic principles to the existing state structures. Throughout the period of the Umayyad *Caliphate*, the Islamic religion was formulated more concretely. During this period, the state structure incorporated all human conduct into a unified religious system of judgement, whereas the words of the *Qur'an* were interpreted in combination with the memories of the community. The prevalent criteria for the judgement of a particular issue were set, according to the habitual

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itself as the alliances that Muhammad himself held with the tribal leaders were about to collapse; the old elite of nomadic tribal leaders, not very flexible in accepting the newly emerged socio-political order, led an outright rejection of the Prophet's claims.

<sup>3</sup> The first pillar ('*Shahada*') was a source of testimony of God's existence through the message He revealed to His Prophet, Muhammad. The second pillar, the daily ritual prayers ('*salat*'), represented a fixed form conducted, at first twice a day, and later five times a day. The third pillar ('*zakat*') entailed the dedication of a certain amount of income to a charitable cause as a source of philanthropy to the needy. Apart from these three main pillars, another two pillars emerged, no less binding for the members of the community; the obligation of fasting ('*sawm*') once a year in the month of Ramadan as a sign of repentance for sins. The pilgrimage ('*Hajj*') to Mecca revealed the obedience to God's will, signifying the unity of the Islamic community.



behaviour of the Prophet, as recorded in the *hadiths*, and in close relation to the judgement of the community, the *sunna*.

At a later stage, from the outset of their rule, the Abbasids had to deal with the inevitable problem of a new dynasty, how to envisage a way to unite a cluster of diverse interests into a viable coalition. To this end, they employed strict religious symbols that would affirm the authority of the *Caliph* as divinely given by virtue of his membership of the Prophet's family. They defined his authority in close association with the *Qur'an*; the principles of right conduct were determined along the lines of the Prophet's habitual behaviour (*sunna*), as well as the *Shari'a*. Moreover, this Islamic order was directly linked to the Arabic language, as the language of the Prophet's revelations. The *Qur'an* gave the Arabic language the appeal of a high language, as this was the first book to be written in Arabic. Hence, Islamic history was situated within the context of the new Islamic faith, the historical experience of the Prophet, the period of the first *Caliphs* or of the first conquests, all of which were recorded in writing. Consequently, at this stage, the *Shari'a* encompassed all the main ideals that symbolised Muslim unity and predominated over every other value. A particular way for evaluating a situation according to these principles emerged; those qualified to exercise their reason when facing a new situation should try to find some elements in a similar situation of the past for which a ruling already existed. Thus, the notion of *ijtihad* was developed to articulate "*this disciplined exercise of reason*" found in a *hadith*.<sup>4</sup> The notion of communal consensus (*'ijma*) gained the status of an unquestionable and authentic truth. At another level, the notion of the *Caliphate* was adjusted to the existing balance of political power; the possibility of an unjust *Caliph* became viable and was extensively used in order to justify the Abbasid revolt against the Umayyads, accused of following unrighteous secular aims. Consequently, having to deal with such a possibility, the Islamic community had to reject the authority of all the unjust rulers.

At a later stage, as the Abbasid *Caliphs* were in a precarious position, they reformed the notion of the *Caliphate* so as to express three main components: the legitimate succession from the Prophet, world affairs and religious conduct. In effect, the *Caliph* represented the succession from the Prophet; the *Sultan* became the agent of military power, representing the government; and the

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<sup>4</sup> Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, London: Faber and Faber, 1991, p.68.

*ulama* were established as guardians of religious faith and practice and, in a sense, the heirs of the Prophet.<sup>5</sup>

On the one hand the Islamic religious doctrines were constructed to support the established state structures and were further developed so as to legitimise them. Most important though, the divine nature of the political authority drew the boundaries of Muslim identity. Throughout the early *Caliphate*, due to the personal connection of the first *Caliphs* with the Prophet, Islamic historical experience remained fresh enough. As long as the Prophet's companions transmitted the message and revelation that Muhammad experienced, Muslim history was recorded in a way that seemed more truthful and objective. As the nature of the *Caliphal* state itself became gradually transformed into a political entity and from the messenger of God the *Caliph* became the political leader of the community, collective memory faded. It was then that Islamic history acquired the story-telling function; in essence, historical events were changed in the process of transmission while not all the sources who recorded them were deemed as truthful any more.<sup>6</sup>

## ***1.2 The Formation of Sectarian Shi'i identity***

### ***1.2.1 From Jihad to Open Challenge of the Dominant Sunni Establishment***

The early Islamic period allowed for a continuing transition and evolution of the new socio-political order. In the aftermath of Muhammad's death a particular vision of the communal leader was constructed. He, who possessed the knowledge of God's will, was regarded as the one who should take the leadership of the community. As long as Muhammad was alive, he was undoubtedly recognised as the authoritative leader of the community. Since Muhammad's death, the succession to the political leadership of the community was disrupted. A way out of this impasse was envisaged with the construction of the *Caliphate*, along the lines of the personal association of the first four *Caliphs* with the Prophet, and of loyalty to the Islamic cause.

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<sup>5</sup> Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 142-143.

<sup>6</sup> Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, p.70

A counter-movement resisted the existing arrangement of succession and attached itself to the candidature of Muhammad's cousin and son in law, Ali and his family for the leadership of the community. The movement grew in importance due to the ardour of Ali's supporters; and most significantly due to Ali's historical ancestry from Muhammad's family, the House of Hashim, and the association of Ali's descendants with Muhammad through his daughter Fatima.<sup>7</sup> However, at this point this group was confined to support for *Alid* candidates, associating religious authority with the Prophet's knowledge and the close connection of Ali with him.

With the establishment of the new socio-political order, these preliminary divisions within the Islamic community became more profound. Incorporating rather diverse populations within the empire, the conquests of Islam raised tension over the succession to the *Caliphate*, as well as the form of authority. Moreover, the decentralised authority of the vast empire brought local centres of power into conflict with the central authority in Medina. During the period of the third *Caliph* Uthman, the governor of Damascus, Mu'âwiya, had acquired unprecedented strength. Political power was dislocated from the centre of the Islamic world, Medina, to Damascus. Eventually, the central state organisation of Medina became devoid of any substantial political power and authority to rule.

At another level, an unfair system of uneven distribution of public funds enhanced class disparities and intensified the internal struggle. During the period of the third *Caliph* Uthman, social and political changes benefited the ruling elite at the expense of the masses, as Uthman promoted the interests the Umayyads, linked to him by tribal lineage. Soon enough, the Muslims rose to oppose these arrangements; during the annual pilgrimage (656 a.d.), delegations arrived at Mecca to voice their grievances against their local rulers, demanding from Uthman that he repair those injustices or leave the throne. Uthman's refusal to comply with these claims brought about a serious upheaval, known as 'the great strife' that led to Uthman's murder and the accusation that Ali had been behind the assassination.

Ali's eventual election to the *Caliphate* was deemed as a serious threat to Mu'âwiya's power. Under the pretext of revenge for the death of Uthman, Mu'âwiya led open warfare (the battle of Siffin) against Ali. At a later stage (661a.d.), Ali was assassinated. As a member of the Hashemite

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<sup>7</sup> See Marshal G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, First Volume: *The Classical Age*, U.S.: The University of Chicago Press, 1974, p.259.

tribe, Ali was regarded as a vehicle of the Hashemite vested political interests; this fact brought inevitable conflict with both the Umayyads and all those discontented groups. This internal conflict though, continued in the aftermath of Mu'âwiya's death and the succession of his son Yazid to the *Caliphate*. The latter fact brought the outrage of Ali's supporters who demanded the active guidance of the community by Ali's son, Husein. With the encouragement of these followers, Husein got involved in the Battle of Kerbala (680 a.d.), where he and most of his family died at the hands of Yazid. Following this period, the group of Ali attached itself to the orbit of sectarian groups, disenchanted by the existing social and political order. These groups voiced a perception of the Umayyad government as acting on the basis of self-interest, detached from the original religious message of Islam.

In the aftermath of these events, warfare became detached from *jihad* led in the name of Islam and the protection of the Muslim community. War was transformed into a struggle for predominance between different aspirants for political power. As the excitement of the first conquests was over, a number of dissident groups rose to challenge Muslim solidarity and elaborate on the original message of Islam. A radical group, the *Kharijites*, declared the holiness of God's judgement and the rejection of any human intervention in the division between Ali and the Umayyads. Moreover, the fact that Ali did not succeed the Prophet directly after his death, and that throughout his reign, he had to face the active Umayyad opposition marked the formalisation of yet another schism, between the supporters of Ali and the Sunni establishment. With the death of both Ali and his son Husein, the *Caliphate* became distant from religious authority. From then on, the notion of the *Caliphate* was attached to the compromises of political power, with hereditary authority concentrated in the hands of a single family.



### 1.2.2 Consolidation of Shi'i Identity: Construction of Shi'i Myths and Symbols

With the death of both Ali and Husein a distinct version of Shi'i history was constructed. Within this new interpretation of history, Uthman and all the Umayyads were represented as usurpers of the divine rule of Ali. Ali and his line were turned into heroes with superhuman attributes. Gradually, the notion of the '*Mahdi*', the 'Guided', became the ideal of the just Islamic ruler. From then on, up until the late Umayyad period of the Marwani *Caliphs*, Shi'ism viewed any one or another line of *Alids* as the main source of God's knowledge. One *Alid* was explicitly designated by his predecessor as the only legitimate ruler, the true *Imam*. In his struggle to confront a real or perceived tyrannical government, each believer was encouraged to attach himself to the *Imam*'s divine rule;<sup>8</sup> the *Imam*'s divine rule being regarded as the only one able to bring real justice on earth.

During the early Abbasid rule, the Shi'ites were disappointed, their hopes for a new, just rule were betrayed.<sup>9</sup> At this stage, they developed their separate religious position blended with a strong sense of *Alid* loyalism. From the mid-eighth century onwards, the most loyal amongst the Shi'ites distinguished Ali as the only legitimate ruler out of the four successors of Muhammad. Since they rejected the legitimacy of Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman, the companions of the Prophet were not regarded as authoritative sources of Muslim religious teaching. In effect, a separate Shi'i *hadith* and law were formulated on the basis of the habitual behaviour of Ali. According to the Shi'i interpretation, law does not represent a body of strict and authoritative norms that would govern

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<sup>8</sup> As Marshall G.S. Hodgson argues "the pious person might, then, endure the unjust government of the Marwani caliphs for the time being; for in guiding his own life, at least, he could refer to the 'ilm of the true Imam, which was available here and now. Such a notion of the Imamate made possible a continuing dissident body of people attached to a continuing line of imams regardless of the fate of particular political movements." Marshal G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, First Volume: *The Classical Age*, p.260.

<sup>9</sup> The source of Shi'i bitterness and betrayal stemmed from the period of the Abbasid revolt against the Marwanid rule, when the Abbasids carried out effective propaganda using mainly the Shi'i religious symbols that touched emotionally a great many Shi'i supporters. Nevertheless, when the Abbasids eventually came to power, they dissociated themselves from these declarations and they exerted a way of rule based on real power politics rather than the ideal religious patterns. In this way, Shi'ites became quite disappointed, but the Abbasids, eager to realise their ambitions for a strong centralised structure, managed to suppress whatever resistance there was against their rule. On the rise and rule of the Abbasids, see Marshal G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, First Volume: *The Classical Age*, p.p. 272-279. See also his article, "How did the early Shi'a become sectarian?", in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 5, 1955, p.p. 9-10.



the life of Muslims, independently of the rulers themselves. What is of major importance is the continuity of these rules, and this is closely linked to the divine authority of the true *Imam*.

At a later stage, the sixth *Imam*, Ja'far al-Sadiq,<sup>10</sup> elaborated on the notion of *nass*,<sup>11</sup> the rightful succession of the Prophet by Ali, designated by the Prophet himself. The second fundamental concept introduced by Ja'far al-Sadiq was that of the '*ilm*'; that is, the *Imam*'s special knowledge of both the external and the esoteric meaning of the *Qu'ran*, which can be passed before his death to the following *Imam*. The real knowledge ('*ilm*) of the Prophet's will, and hence God, would be fully acquired through Ali's family rather than elsewhere. Hence, the '*ilm* was partly inherited, signifying a divine authority that would guide any decision and would clarify any doubt regarding the real '*ilm*.<sup>12</sup> Both concepts, the *nass* and the '*ilm*, were fused in that "...*Nass in fact means transmission of that special knowledge of religion which had been exclusively and legitimately restricted to the divinely favoured Imams of the House of the Prophet through Ali, and which can only be transferred from one Imam to his successor as the legacy of the chosen family.*"<sup>13</sup>

At a next stage, the doctrine of *taqiyya* or dissimulation was formulated as a defensive mechanism against unfavourable socio-political circumstances; the concealment of certain religious and political views posed no direct threat to the temporal and religious authority of the Abbasids. Ja'far al-Sadiq linked *taqiyya* to the theory of the extraordinary knowledge of the *Imams*; the latter knowledge should be limited to only a number of 'chosen' and virtuous persons who inherited that knowledge through *nass*. The duty of any true believer is not to disclose his faith to those who do not share the same beliefs, and those who spread the secrets of their religion amongst the common people are regarded as traitors. In this way Shi'ism could sustain and preserve itself through unfavourable and hostile political circumstances. In effect, *taqiyya*

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<sup>10</sup> On the role of Jafar al-Sadiq in formulating more concretely Shi'i identity, see, Marshal G.S. Hodgson, "How did the early Shi'a become sectarian?", p.p. 10-13.

<sup>11</sup> S.H.M. Jafri defined the concept as follows; "the Imamate is a prerogative bestowed by God upon a chosen person, from the family of the Prophet, who before his death and with the guidance of God, transfers the Imamate to another by an explicit designation (*Nass*)" See, S.H.M.Jafri, *Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam*, Qum: Ansariyah Publications, 1989, p. 290.

<sup>12</sup> As Marshall Hodgson mentions, it is through this knowledge, that "Muslims could look to an era of justice based on true Islamic '*Ilm* if Alids came to power." Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, Second Volume: *The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Period*, p.259.

<sup>13</sup> Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, Second Volume: *The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Period*, p. 291.

confirmed communal sovereignty while at the same time rejected the established state structures. Moreover, as an instrument of social control, the practice could accommodate the community outside the bounds of a centralised authority.

In essence, the major Shi'i doctrines were articulated throughout this period as an exigency in the face of the real or perceived unjust rule of the Abbasid regime. Concrete Islamic norms were established through the *Shari'a* so as to legitimise social action. Shi'i identity, constructed in close interaction with this establishment, took a reactionary rather than a conformist form. Hence, the construction of distinct Shi'i doctrines allowed the community to articulate its own esoteric truth, opposed to the wider exoteric truth of the Sunni Muslim establishment. It was these esoteric and selective doctrines that held the community together, functioning as defensive mechanisms against persecution, and defining both its quiescent and revolutionary outlook.

### ***1.3 Shi'i Historical experience in Lebanon: A History of Persecution***

#### ***1.3.1 Shi'i Historical Background in Lebanon***

Shi'ism is believed to have first appeared in Lebanon since the 7th century when the third *Caliph* Uthman exiled the loyal companion of Ali, Abu Dharr al-Ghafari. The latter came to south Lebanon where he converted some of the inhabitants to Shi'ism. This fact explains the conviction of the Shi'ites of Lebanon that their community is the oldest Shi'i community, closely associated with Ali, through his loyal companion and one of the first supporters of his cause. The Shi'ites view Jabal Amil (South Lebanon) as a sacred land, representing the particularity of the Shi'i community residing there.

The irreversible changes of the *Caliphal* state delineated new boundaries of political authority. The decline of the Abbasid *Caliphate*<sup>14</sup> in the tenth century saw the rise of a number of Shi'i

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<sup>14</sup> During this period, a new model, based on the symbolic and nominal notion of the *caliphal* authority, replaced the notion of the *High Caliphate*. The particular historico-political circumstances allowed for a more definite fragmentation of the whole system into various centers of power that had only a nominal allegiance to the *Caliph*. Central power became increasingly distrusted and without substantial credibility, as all the main components of the prior Islamic solidarity were about to collapse; the court of Baghdad

dynasties, which ruled an extended region, from Mesopotamia to Syria. During the period of the Fatimid rule in Egypt, *Isma'ili Shi'ism*<sup>15</sup> became the religion of the state and, through a widespread network of propaganda and missionary seminaries, Fatimid patronage was extended to the largest part of Syria and the rest of the Arab peninsula. During the period, both Tyre and Tripoli emerged as predominant ports and major cultural centres until they were both destroyed by the Crusades. At the height of the Fatimid rule in Egypt, North Africa, Palestine, Syria and a part of Iraq, the Shi'i community of what today is Lebanon became dominant in the regions that constitute Lebanon proper: the Shouf and Wadi al-Taim. Three Shi'i *Emirates* were established: the *Emirate* of Banu Mirdas (1021-1028 a.d.) in the Bekaa, the *Emirate* of Abu Talib Banu'Umar (1070-1108 a.d.) which extended from Jabla in Syria to Jbayl in Lebanon and that of 'Ayn ad-Dawla Bin Abi 'Aqil (1058-1124 a.d.) in what is today south Lebanon.<sup>16</sup>

By the mid eleventh century, the Shi'ites had reached their peak. On the eve of the first Crusade, at the end of the second half of the twelfth century, the Fatimid rule in Egypt was in serious decline. The lack of Shi'i leadership, during this period, saw the succession of a number of Sunnite dynasties that ended Shi'i domination in the region. The restoration of Sunnite dominance under the Seljuqids (1055 a.d.) placed the religious sectarian communities in a different position vis-à-vis state authority. The Seljuqid suppressive policies rendered the Shi'i community powerless.

The final expulsion of the Crusades, in the late thirteenth century, brought the Sunni dynasty of the Mamluk sultans to rule. The Mamlukes were particularly repressive towards the Muslim minorities Shi'ites, Alawis and Druzes. Large numbers of Shi'ites under attack in the regions of

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unable to provide effective leadership; the army, much less than the established symbol of the prior period of Islamic conquests and victories, had become a body of mercenaries no longer identified with the Muslim community as a whole. The new order established and ruled by independent governments became quite dispersed, culturally fractured and in constant expansion.

<sup>15</sup> The Fatimids, named after the Prophet's daughter Fatima, emerged as a group of Shi'i adherents who claimed descent from Ali and Fatima. They attached themselves to *Ismaili Shi'ism*, which supported the claim to the *Imamate* of Isma'il, the eldest son of Jafar al-Sadiq, who is regarded by most of the Shi'ites as the sixth *Imam*. Even though Isma'il died five years before his father, leaving his brother Musa al-Kazam as the *Imam*, the *Isma'ilis* believe that Isma'il had been irreversibly proclaimed as successor to his father, and that his son Muhammad had become *Imam* after him. They declare Muhammad as the *Mahdi* who would return so as to unveil the deeper meaning of the *Qur'anic* revelation and to rule the world with justice. For more details on *Isma'ili Shi'ism* and its connection with the Fatimid dynasty see, Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, p.p.40-41. See, also, Ira Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p.p.345-349.

<sup>16</sup> See Laurent Chabry and Annie Chabry, *Politique et Minorités au Proche-Orient*, Paris: Éditions Maisonneuve & Larose, 1984, p.135.

Akkar and Kisrawan were converted either to Sunnism or even to Maronitism, which was tolerated by the Mamluks, or they migrated to the South. The last Shi'i community that fell to the Mamluks, in 1305, was the Shi'i community of Kisrawan. Eventually, this region was evacuated of its Shi'i inhabitants, who found refuge in Ba'albek, Jizzin, Jabal Amil, and in some other regions around Beirut and Sidon. Since then, Kisrawan and other regions such as Matn gradually became almost entirely Maronite areas.

During the Ottoman period, the turbulent relationship of the Shi'ites of both Ba'albek and Jabal Amil with Mount Lebanon reflected the prevalent politics of the *Emirate*. The relationship between the Shi'ites and the first rulers of Ottoman Mount Lebanon, the *Emirs* of the House of Ma'an, was very turbulent. As has been argued, “ *the rulers of Banu Ma'an used to squeeze all of the resources from Jabal Amil. Fakhhr ad-Din occupied the area surrounding Kawthariyya, which is the center of the Ali Saghir family; his soldiers killed and plundered there for three days. Then they attacked the surrounding villages... The Matawali were suffering...*”<sup>17</sup> In 1638, the *Emir* Milhim Banu Ma'an (nephew of Fakhr al-Din), entered Ansar looking for his opponent Prince Alm al-Din; one thousand six hundred Shi'ites of Jabal Amil were massacred then. During the eighteenth century, in Ba'albek, protracted conflict erupted between the Harfush *Emirs* and both the Ottoman authority and Mount Lebanon. Moreover, in the mid-fifteenth century the Hamadi *Shaykhs* expanded from their stronghold in Hirmil into the predominantly Maronite areas to the north and west by raiding the regions of Bsharri and Dinniyya. As in the sixteenth century the Hamadi had moved into Akkar, in 1762 they were dispossessed of these regions due to a Maronite uprising, encouraged by the *Wali* of Tripoli. In 1766, after the battle of Amyun, encouraged by the *Emir* Yusuf al-Shihabi, the Hamadi and their followers were demoted to Ba'albek and al-Hirmil.

With the passing of Mount Lebanon into Shihabist hands, the Shi'ites of Lebanon were expelled by Maronites who replaced them in Kisrawan and the northern part of Mount Lebanon. Between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the *Emirs* of different regions of Mount Lebanon persecuted certain Shi'i chiefs. In 1743, a massacre organised by the Milhim Banu Haidar Shihab, left a thousand Shi'ites dead. From 1759 to 1760, seeking to avenge assassination of the Bishop of Ehden, allegedly by a Shi'ite, the Maronite forces of Yusif Shihab drove the Shi'ites out of the

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<sup>17</sup> Evelyn Aleene Early, *The Amiliyya Society of Beirut: A Case Study of an Emerging Urban Za'im*, p. 12.



Maronite Mount.<sup>18</sup> These Shi'ites gradually found refuge in the Ba'albek, Hirmil and Jabal Amil. During the 18th century, Jabal Amil was organised into a confederacy under *Shaykh* Nassif al-Nasser. As he opposed the Shihabis, in 1780 Jazzar Ahmad Pasha (the so-called butcher) attacked him. In the aftermath of his victory, in the battle of Yarun, al-Jazzar crushed the Shi'ites of the area. While a large number of Shi'i scholars were executed, the ones who survived persecution found refuge in Iran and Iraq. In addition, during this period conflicts erupted with Druzes in 'Ansar, Jba'a, Kefar Roman, and other nearby villages; the result was the expulsion of the Shi'ites of Jizzin. Being the targets of both the Maronite and Druze expansionist strategies, and due to their territorial marginality, the Shi'ites developed a sense of territorial exclusiveness, the areas where they still reside became their main territorial base.

As a result of persecution, the Shi'i community, nearly extinct from Mount Lebanon, was concentrated into the Ba'albek-Hirmil in the north and Jabal Amil in the south. By the 15th century, the Jabal Amil area was divided into four northern and four southern provinces. The former, including the capitals of Nabatiyya, 'Ansar, Jba'a and Jizzin, were administered from Sidon. The latter, with capitals at Bint Jebail, Tributn, Qana, and Tyre, were known as *Belad Beshara* and were ruled by the Ali Saghir tribe. Ba'albek was under the Harfush family, Hirmil, the Hamadiyya tribe.<sup>19</sup> Two distinctive Shi'i communities evolved in the northern and southern areas. The remoteness of these regions from one another minimised the communication between the respective Shi'i communities, rendering them distinct from one another. Due to its location, in between north Syria, south Syria and Palestine, Ba'albek was a major contributor to the central Syrian prosperity between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. In the eighteenth century, the Ba'albek area declined due to the protracted conflict of the Harfush *Emirs* with Mount Lebanon. In the Ba'albek-Hirmil, a semi-nomadic organisation was established in the form of large feudal estates. The Shi'ites in this region were clannish people, organised in terms of strict codes of honour. In Jabal Amil, private ownership was more widespread and agriculture was the dominant form. Last, in terms of religious scholarship and tradition, the Ba'albek, throughout the years, has not offered the rich tradition of religious scholarship that Jabal Amil did.

<sup>18</sup> Laurent Chabry and Annie Chabry, *Politique et Minorités au Proche-Orient*, p.136.

<sup>19</sup> See Evelyn Alleen Early, *The Amiliyya Society of Beirut: A Case Study of an Emerging Urban Za'im*, p. 12.



### 1.3.2 Ottoman Shi'ites and their Iranian Connection

The conflict between the Safavid and the Ottoman Empires could be situated within the context of two separate imperial state structures. In their effort to legitimise their authority and demand obedience from the subject population, both the Safavid and the Ottoman rulers forged two religious cultures distinct from each other. In effect, the conflict between the two empires signified a conflict between the religious traditions and cultures that each state represented. The world of Islam became fragmented into areas of Shi'i majority and Sunni minority on the one hand, and Sunni majority and Shi'i minority on the other, each increasingly intolerant of the opposite minority.

Having to deal with a fragmented social organisation, the Safavids superimposed Shi'ism in a way that would exclusively assert their own legitimate authority, at the expense of rival centres of power. They established Shi'ism as a state religion, in a state predominantly Sunni. This could not be achieved without opposition, or even measures of persecution for those who refused to conform to the new religious exclusivity. Consequently, the prevalence of Shi'ism could only be assured through the violent suppression of Sunnism.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire reconstructed the notion of the *Caliphate*, represented by the rulers' de facto position as the protectors of Islam on the lines of God's will.<sup>21</sup> As the representative of Sunni Islam,<sup>22</sup> the Ottoman ruler regarded the population under the Safavid rule

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<sup>20</sup> Especially during the early period of consolidation of the Safavid state, the ritual of cursing all the three *Caliphs* and all the enemies of both Ali and the *Imams* was emphasised; those who did not respond were condemned to death; moreover, the Safavids diminished the pilgrimage to Mecca while they emphasised the major importance of visits to the shrines of Shi'i *Imams*. See Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, Third Volume: *The Gunpowder Empires and Modern Times*, p. 37.

<sup>21</sup> The Ottoman incorporation of the former Abbasid lands, Damascus, Cairo and Mecca, gave Ottoman authority the image of the Abbasid *Caliphate*, always extolled as an outstanding paradigm of Islamic rule. The Ottomans created a unifying notion of religious authority supported by a high culture, based on the patrimonial and imperial dimensions of authority and used it so as to legitimise the Ottoman *Sultanic* rule as the utmost source of authority over the people. A notion of Islamic authority was reconstructed within which the authority of the *Sultan* was derived from his role as an executor of the *Shari'a*; government was regarded as legitimate as long as it was organised and ruled in conformity with the *Shari'a* and the Islamic interests.

<sup>22</sup> An absolutist and cosmopolitan Islamic culture emerged to build on both Islamic and Byzantine cultures, through which the Ottoman state stood as a *ghazi* state, the warrior of the faith, fulfilling the primary Muslim duty of *Jihad*. The Ottoman protection of the holy cities of Arabia as well as the organisation of the pilgrimage increased the Ottoman legitimacy as protectors of the Islamic heritage. The Ottomans,

as 'heretics' who had to be forced into subjugation. From the outset, the establishment of a militant Shi'i state next to the Ottoman State was regarded by the Ottomans as a threat, especially in view of a large number of ardent supporters of the Safavid Shi'i cause within the Ottoman borders themselves. In 1512, the Safavid *Shah* Isma'il challenged the Ottoman authority. On the eve of the Ottoman invasion of Persia, the *Sultan* Selim put to death all the Shi'i adherents in the Ottoman Empire. He declared his expedition against Isma'il as a sacred mission against infidels and heretics, who insulted the real meaning of Islam. In the battle of Chaldiran, in 1514, the Ottomans defeated the Safavids.<sup>23</sup>

Hence, the Shi'i community of the Ottoman Empire existed as a sect marginal to both the Ottoman state and society. Due to their strong affiliation with Iran, the Shi'ites of the Ottoman Empire were treated with suspicion. An early tradition of contacts between the Shi'ites of the Ottoman Empire, Jabal Amil in particular, and the respective community in Iran was reinforced especially in stressful periods for the Shi'ites of what is now Lebanon proper. As early as the fourteenth century, Jabal Amil became the locus of numerous schools devoted to the teaching and proliferation of Shi'ism. A well-founded tradition was established among the *ulama* of Jabal Amil in particular to study in other prestigious teaching centers of Shi'ism, so as to reach the highest level of knowledge of Shi'ite jurisprudence. In their attempt to break with the disruptive environment of Jabal Amil, these *ulama* became affiliated with other Shi'i centers in Iran.

Nevertheless, most of them did not become powerful beyond the boundaries of Jabal Amil until well into the sixteenth century, with the rise of the Safavid dynasty in Iran.<sup>24</sup> During the Safavid era, from 1501 to 1736, the Safavids employed a large number of Shi'i scholars from Jabal Amil to transmit Shi'ism in Iran. Even though the immigrant scholars could never reach high positions, they could play a leading role in the effective implementation of Shi'i doctrines. These *ulama*

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possessing the Islamic credentials, considered themselves as protectors of the Muslims worldwide, in any case these would appeal for political and military support.

<sup>23</sup> From then onwards, the Safavids placed themselves on the defensive and did not initiate any offensive strategy against the Ottomans for the most part of the century. At a later stage, this balance became upset as the *Shah* Abbas the Great invaded and captured the Ottoman province of Baghdad in 1623. This was perceived as one of the most victorious moments in the history of Iranian Shi'ism as the great Shi'i shrines of Najaf and Kerbala passed into Safavid hands. The peace of Amasya (962/1555) initiated a thirty-year period of peace between the Ottomans and the Safavids.

<sup>24</sup> The Safavids emerged within the context of the several Sufi orders (*tariqah*), situated at Ardabil in Azerbaijan. At fifteenth century, the Safavids from Sunnism were converted into Shi'ism. With the support of diverse local people, they led expeditions into Anatolia; in 1501, their leader Isma'il occupied Tabriz and proclaimed himself *Shah* of Iran.

could establish the still weak Safavid position, due to their lack of rooted interests in both Persian society and the dominant classes. Hence, a family succession allowed the promotion of whole families from Jabal Amil to good positions within Iran. From an early stage a new class of religious scholars from Lebanon became established in Iran, contributing to the shaping of Iranian society.<sup>25</sup> The declaration of Twelver Shi'ism as a state religion in Iran transformed the perception of the Prophet's Arab lineage; Shi'ism became attached to the Persian culture,<sup>26</sup> while Iran was associated with the Shi'ites worldwide.

Within the Ottoman context however, the incorporation of the Islamic ideal into the Ottoman state brought the old split between the Sunnites and the Shi'ites to the fore, defined along the lines of righteousness versus deviation. The harsh Ottoman measures against the Shi'ites further alienated the latter from the Ottoman authority. In their attempt to undermine the Ottoman authority in both Jabal Amil and Ba'albek, the Safavids established close links with the feudal lords of both these areas, particularly the Shi'i clan of Harfush in Ba'albek. The Safavids encouraged the Harfushes to extend their power in the southern parts of the Bekaa valley so as to gain access to their fellow Shi'ites in Jabal Amil. In order to deal effectively with the lurking Shi'i danger, the Ottomans chose the Druze member from the House of Ma'an, Fakhr al-Din, and appointed him governor of the Sanjak of Sidon. At a later stage, when the war between the Safavids and the Ottomans erupted once again, Fakhr al-Din was also appointed governor of the

<sup>25</sup> One of the first theologians who visited Iran was al-*Shaykh* Izz al-Din al-Husayn ibn abd al-Samad al-Harithi al-Hamdani, who moved from the town of Juba to Iran where he stayed for the most part of his life. A linguist and a poet, he became known for producing a great many important works on various religious issues. His most prominent son, al-*Shaykh* Baha al-Din Muhammad ibn al-Husayn al-Amili, was taken at an early age to Iran from Ba'albek. His perfect knowledge of the Persian language gave him a privileged access to the court of *Shah* Abbas the Great (1587-1629) and enabled the prolific production of his scholarly, literary and theological works under Safavid patronage. For details on the life of al-*Shaykh* Izz al-Din al-Husayn ibn abd al-Samad al-Harithi al-Hamdani, see Albert Hourani, "From Jabal Amil to Persia", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies and African Studies*, no. XLIX, part 1, 1986, p.138. See also, Ali Khazen el Amin, *The Shi'ites of Lebanon*, p.p. 173-174.

<sup>26</sup> Within the Safavid Empire, a high culture was constructed that did not erase the various local cultures but rather adjusted them to the Shi'i principles; hence, a 'persianisation' of Shi'ism took place, in the sense that wider Shi'i concepts and practices (Shi'i religious identity) emerged to interact with local customs and beliefs (local tribal identity). Shi'i myths and symbols were incorporated in, and adjusted to, a broader political culture which, entailing a synthesis of Shi'i and ancient Persian components and symbols, provided the main bases of state legitimacy; during the early Safavid period, by claiming that Ali's son Husein married the daughter of the last Sasanid King, a certain linkage was formulated between Shi'ism and the ancient Iranian monarchical tradition. This was reproduced through the proclamation of the Safavid ruler under the title of the Sasanid Emperors, 'the Shadow of God on Earth'; hence the *Shah* represented the only legitimate ruler and the guarantor of Shi'i ideals, his divine authority derived from his supposed ancestry from the seventh *Imam*.

predominantly Shi'i district of Safad, which gave him a direct authority over the Shi'ites of Jabal Amil.<sup>27</sup>

At a period of relative state decline,<sup>28</sup> in the late eighteenth century, a local chief, Dahir al-Umar, rose to control the southern parts of Palestine, up to the southern parts of Sidon, establishing himself as autonomous ruler of Acre. During the period of his ascendancy, the Shi'i peasants of Jabal Amil attached themselves to his rule and ignored the Ottoman central government. The Ottoman central administration authorised the Bosnian, Ahmad al-Jazzar, to maintain Ottoman rule in Syria. Having to cope with the Persian raids on the eastern frontier, and struggling against Dahir al-Umar's dominion in the region, Ahmad al-Jazzar organised offensive expeditions against the Shi'ites of Jabal Amil.<sup>29</sup> During the period of al-Jazzar's rule, Shi'ites saw most of their leaders executed or forced to flee, while they themselves were treated with great ferocity.

The establishment of an overarching Sunni Islamic ideology through a wide network of governmental and educational institutions pushed Shi'i religious ideology to the margins of state and society. With the establishment of the *millet* system,<sup>30</sup> a religious denomination of citizenship emphasised the autonomous existence of various religious communities within the bounds of a predominant Muslim state. Viewed as dissidents, the Shi'ites were classified amongst the limited body of groups without a *millet* of their own, kept under strict control and always treated with great suspicion by the central authority. Consequently, the Shi'i non-inclusion into a separate *millet*, implied the rejection of both a separate Shi'i identity; finally, it reflects the negation of the importance of sect in inducing the common consciousness in the way religion does.

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<sup>27</sup> See Kamal Salibi, *A Modern History of Lebanon*, p.p.125-126.

<sup>28</sup> This crisis emerged in the aftermath of the Ottoman defeat by Russia, in 1774, and was exacerbated due to the Persian raids of Anatolia and the subsequent brief Persian occupation of Basra in Mesopotamia,

<sup>29</sup> For more details on the expedition of Ahmad al-Jazzar against Dahir al-Umar, and the Shi'ites of Jabal Amil, see, Adel Ismail, *Documents Diplomatiques et Consulaires R  latif    l'Histoire du Liban*, vol.2, p.p.223-29.

<sup>30</sup> The *millet* system conferred some degree of autonomy and privilege on minority religious communities to manage their own religious and civil matters.



## *1.4 Representation of Shi'i Identity: Shi'i Myths and Symbols*

When a large number of Shi'i dynasties ruled throughout the Middle East, in the tenth century, Shi'i free intellectual pursuits flourished with the adoption of the *Mu'tazilis* school of thought.<sup>31</sup> Within these favourable circumstances, the Shi'ites gradually developed their doctrine of the *Imamate*; the latter doctrine was articulated as an exigency at a point of crisis, when the line of Ali's descendants was vanishing as a result of repression. The formulation of this notion allowed the Shi'ites to cope with the question of succession, in the sense that the sacred order of Islam did not vanish as long as the designated *Imam* still existed to represent the divine authority on Earth.<sup>32</sup> When the twelfth Imam, Muhammad al-Mahdi, went missing in the ninth century Shi'ism was in a major crisis. Even though nothing is certain about the fate of Muhammad al-Mahdi, for the Twelver Shi'ites he is thought to have disappeared at an early age and communicated with this world through four agents (*wakils*). The period of the four agents was called 'lesser *Ghayba*', lesser absence. When, in 940, the last of these four *wakils* died, without naming his successor, the period of the 'greater *Ghayba*' began, symbolising the beginning of the Occultation, which would be completed at the End of Time.

At a subsequent stage, the idea of Occultation shaped religious authority. As the Shi'i believer does not recognise any legitimate authority on earth other than that of the *Imam*, he clearly takes a stand vis-à-vis the notion of legitimate sovereignty, regarded as yet to be revealed. As long as the *Imam* went on to be the spiritual leader and guardian of both the community and faith, the community could sustain itself through time and space. A distinct class of 'learned men' (*ulama*) rose to act in the absence of the Hidden *Imam* and took up the Imam's main roles. The *ulama* represent the fundamental interpreters of Shi'i doctrines through changing circumstances. They should possess the main attributes of the Hidden *Imam*: both an exoteric and esoteric knowledge; that is, a deep understanding of both the visible and invisible world. Moreover, they should have the spiritual virtues of the *Imam* that would enhance their authority over the believers. In addition the practice of *taqiyya* links the religious leaders of the community to a government outside the control of a

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<sup>31</sup> According to the *Mu'tazilis* school of thought, the truths of religion could be reached only through reason.

<sup>32</sup> As has been pointed out, "God had placed the Imam as His proof (*hujja*) in the world at all times, to teach authoritatively the truths of religion and govern mankind in accordance with justice." Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, p.182.



recognised *Imam*.<sup>33</sup> The practice of *taqiyya* allowed them not to submit to any ruler whose authority was not recognised and, at the same time, not to abandon their claims or give legitimacy to temporal rule.

Moreover, around the tenth century the tombs of the *Imams* became established as places of pilgrimage. Amongst them, the tomb of Ali in Najaf and Husein in Kerbala acquired great emotional power for the Shi'i community. Najaf became established as a centre of Shi'i religious studies and intensive intellectual activity as early as the eleventh century, with a large number of *ulama* from Jabal Amil moving there to study and subsequently teach.<sup>34</sup> Through their affiliation to the holy city of Iraq, al-Najaf, the Shi'i populations found a relief from the strained socio-political context of the Ottoman period. The Shi'i *ulama* of this region viewed al-Najaf much the same way as the rest of the Shi'i world did. Najaf, where the tombs of the *Imams* are found, became the meeting point between the caravans of Shi'i believers and the native population, the common element between both being the collective memories of Najaf.<sup>35</sup>

Moreover, with the annual celebration of the core Shi'i ritual of *Ashura*, Kerbala became established as a symbol of Husein's martyrdom and death, on the tenth day of Muharram in the year 680. The ritual is based on an intense lamentation, as the believers weep copiously for the death of Husein and simulate the events of Kerbala. The various parts of the ritual, such as the mourning processions and the passion plays, are constructed to induce the emotions of the believers.<sup>36</sup> Hence, Husein's martyrdom symbolises the fact that even though the *Imam* has been defeated while in his earthly mission, he will win at the End of Time. Consequently, weeping for

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<sup>33</sup> In effect, "the Shi'i jurists and mujtahids, even when accepting public office, continued, by resorting to *taqiyya*, to see themselves as the deputies of the missing *Imam* and not of the ruler. The legitimacy of the ruler remained in question; his official position, so far as they were concerned, was irrelevant, as long as they were enabled to serve the spiritual interest of their followers." Abbas Kelidar, "The Shii Community and Politics in the Arab East", *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 19, January 1983, p.6.

<sup>34</sup> Among the first Shi'i 'ulama that moved to Najaf from Jabal Amil was Isma'il ibn al-Husayn al Awdi, who died in 1184. Isma'il is believed to have left Jabal Amil and his own native town of Jizzin to visit the tomb of Ali and the rest Shi'i shrines in al-Najaf. He then stayed there and became one of the most prominent religious scholars, acquiring a great deal of authority within the religious establishment of Najaf. On more details, see Ali Khazen el Amin, *The Shi'ites of Lebanon*, p.p. 170-171.

<sup>35</sup> See Waddah Charara, *Transformation d'une Manifestation Religieuse dans un Village du Liban-Sud (Ashura)*, p. 9

<sup>36</sup> As Fuad Ajami eloquently illustrates, "Men and women grieved for the fallen *Imam*. They saw in his renunciation of worldly things and his martyrdom their own dispossession. The split between the Shia, the partisans, of Huseyn, and those who accepted the dominant order that slew him would, in time, deepen into a psychological and political chasm. Lamenting Huseyn's fate, the Shia exalted the third *Imam* into a tragic figure." Fuad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr & the Shia Islam of Lebanon*, p. 141.

Husein is weeping for the future victory and triumph of the Shi'i cause. Within this context, suffering and martyrdom are regarded as necessary components for the hastening of the long awaited realisation of justice on earth.<sup>37</sup>

With the establishment of Sunni dynasties Shi'ism became established as a peripheral ideology. The 'expectation of *Imam*' became a hope for a future relief from tyrannical and suppressive rule. Consequently, vis-à-vis the Sunni notions of consensus and unity, an opposing Shi'i view of justice and expected salvation is articulated. In this way these Shi'i notions "*help to reconcile two opposed positions, rejecting the centralized authority of the Sunni state while upholding the sovereignty of the sect, the religious community.*"<sup>38</sup>

Throughout most of Shi'i history, the practice of the Shi'i religious rites, *Ashura* in particular, became an extremely difficult task, due to the absence of written documents on the history of these rituals; thus, oral tradition remained the most usual form available, especially by means of consultation with the elderly. As the Shi'ites of Lebanon became repeatedly persecuted and mistreated, they transmitted their traditions, "*from mouth to ear out of fear that their documents one day would turn against them.*"<sup>39</sup> Throughout the Ottoman period, as the central authority forbade the public commemoration of *Ashura*, the ritual was practiced secretly in homes with one person guarding.<sup>40</sup>

During turbulent times in the history of the Shi'ites of what is now known as Lebanon, the internal rivalries for political predominance dominated the communal political scene. Nevertheless, the battles with external adversaries strengthened communal solidarity, linking the communal struggles to the Shi'i ideals of bravery and heroism. Shi'ism was extolled in a long history of

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<sup>37</sup> As Yann Richard argues, the battle of Kerbala is often described within the context of Shia tradition as "a prototype of every struggle for justice, every suffering. That is where the heart of Shi'ism lies, in this agony which is at one and the same time a revolt and a sign of hope." See Yann R. Richard, *Shi'ite Islam: Polity, Ideology, and Creed*, London: Blackwell, 1995, p. 29.

<sup>38</sup> Fuad I. Khuri, "The Ulama: A Comparative Study of Sunni and Shi'a Religious Officials", in *Middle East Studies*, vol. 23 no. 3, 1987, p. 41. On the same issue, see also Nazih N. Ayubi, "State Islam and Communal Plurality", in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, no. 524, November 1992, p.p. 79-91.

<sup>39</sup> Maatouk Frédérik, *La Representation de la Mort de l'Imam Hussein á Nabatieh (Liban-Sud)*, Institut des Sciences Social, no.14, Beirut, Lebanese University : Imprimerie Catholique, 1974.

<sup>40</sup> Maatouk Frédérik, *La representation de la mort de l'Imam Hussein á Nabatieh (Liban-Sud)*, p. 91

revolt, so that the term *Metoualis*,<sup>41</sup> was used to signify the struggles, the courage and the religious particularity of the Shi'i population of Lebanon.<sup>42</sup>

This particularity was interpreted into an intimate bond with the homeland, the latter bond re-invented in the works of the Shi'i scholars. A Shi'i scholar from Jabal Amil, Muhammad al-Hurr, distinguished in seventeenth century Safavid Iran, in his published biographical dictionary of Shi'i scholars, expressed his special gratitude to his place of birth, devoting the first part of his work to his homeland, Jabal Amil. Muhammad al-Hurr gave the following reasons for his choice of Jabal Amil; the first reason is the special attachment to one's place of birth and origin (*watan*). Second, he characterised the Shi'ism of Jabal Amil as the oldest one, referring to the story of Abu Dharr; he moreover distinguished Jabal Amil for offering the vast majority of Shi'i scholars.<sup>43</sup> Having to put up with both Maronite and Druze expansionism in the northern and southern areas respectively, the Shi'i population of both Jabal Amil and Ba'albek attached themselves to their land. This land signified "*a rich lore which celebrated the valour of the local chiefs and heroes who had risen to defend their territory against repeated invasion from the Shuf in the days of the Shihabs.*"<sup>44</sup>

When political developments alienated the Shi'i population from the predominant Sunni central authority, they acquired a particular vision of themselves through the representation of their local history. Thus, the death of the two grand *ulamas* designated as the 'First Martyr' and the 'Second Martyr'<sup>45</sup> signified the symbols of Shi'ism, and both were represented as heroic deaths in the face

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<sup>41</sup> On the etymology and use of the term *Metoualis*, Henri S. J. Lammens in his article, suggested that the term signified a sense of estrangement and aversion that delineated the distinctive lines of Shi'ites from the orthodox Islam. Evelyn Aleen Early defines this term as "derived from a verb that means to take someone as a wali (protector)-in this case Ali-and give him loyalty." She presents the various theories according to which the term was first used. One theory is that its use began in the time of Mamluk oppression; another, claims that in the time of Fakhr al-Din, the Shi'ites were united and called themselves *Matawila* for the first time; other sources seek the first use of the term later in the eighteenth century. See, Henri S. J. Lammens "Les 'Perses' du Liban et l'origine du *Métoualis*", in *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*, tome 14, Beirut: Imperie Catholique, 1929 p.p. 21-39. See also, Evelyn Aleen Early, *The Amiliyya Society of Beirut: A Case Study of an Emerging Urban Za'im*, p.p.8-9

<sup>42</sup> See Mounzer Jaber, *Pouvoir et Société dans le Jabal Amel de 1740 à 1920 dans la Conscience des Chroniqueurs Chiites et dans un Essai d'Interprétation*, p.255.

<sup>43</sup> Albert Hourani, "The Safavid Era", in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi, and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Expectation of the Millenium: Shi'ism in History*, U.S.: State University of New York Press, 1989, p. 191.

<sup>44</sup> Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions*, p. 205.

<sup>45</sup> The First Martyr was Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Makki (734/133-34-786/1384), from Jizzin, who advocated the right of competent scholars to give legal judgements rather than judges designated by unjust rulers. He was imprisoned by the governor of Damascus and finally executed. The Second Martyr, Zayn al-



of injustice. One of the most significant features of Shi'i history was the rhythm of martyrology and the selective commemoration of certain events as demonstrating the main achievements of the community.<sup>46</sup> A second aspect was the deep Shi'i perception of themselves as the victims of aggression and violence due to their confessional belonging. The contradictory notions of the passivity of the victim and revolt were reinvented within the context of attacks inflicted upon the Shi'ites of Jabal Amil and Bekaa.<sup>47</sup>

Another central aspect of the Shi'i attitude was a timid and quiescent approach, most of the time in isolation from the general social and political context. The position of the religious classes in particular, and the way these were conditioned to function within the context of the Ottoman Empire, in turn, bred the Shi'i collective attitude. Throughout the Ottoman period the Shi'i religious classes abstained from any social and political activities. In their attempt to expand the validity of their judgements, those of the *ulama* most concerned with the law had to rely on the power of the local lord, the so-called *za'im*. As is argued, political alliances could be formed between one or more *alim* (sing. *ulama*) and a particular *za'im*, but overall the class of *ulama* did not commit themselves to any organised political action, due to their well-established role vis-à-vis the political leadership.<sup>48</sup> In terms of their material sources, the *ulama* in general had very poor sources of income, as only a few of them were landowners. In most cases, the *ulama* lived on charitable contributions and taxes.<sup>49</sup> Lacking the financial resources for their survival, the *ulama* increasingly relied on the class of *zu'ama* (col. *za'im*) for the provision of sufficient resources in exchange for giving their support for the local *za'im*.

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Din Ali (911/1506-966/1558) who came from a family of scholars in Juba, is said to have worked systematically on the transmission of *Hadith*, using terms taken from Sunni scholars. The circumstances of his death remain unknown; he was either killed by an emissary of the *Sultan* or was executed by order of the Grand *Vizir*. For more information on the life and the scholarly works of both Martyrs, see Albert Hourani, "From Jabal Amil to Persia."

<sup>46</sup> Waddah Charara, *Transformations d'une Manifestation Religieuse dans un Village du Liban-Sud (Ashura)*, p.6

<sup>47</sup> Waddah Charara, *Transformations d'une Manifestation Religieuse dans un Village du Liban-Sud (Ashura)*, p.8.

<sup>48</sup> Tarif Khalidi, "Shaykh Ahmad 'Arif al-Zayn and al-'Irfan", in Marwan R. Burheiry, *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890-1939*, American University of Beirut: Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies, 1981, p.119.

<sup>49</sup> As has been argued, the old religious tax, the *khums*, during this period were "...an entirely voluntary contribution paid by pious and wealthy members of the community to the major 'ulama' of Alid descent (sayyid). The Khums was not paid regularly and the amount was subject to bargaining." Tarif Khalidi, "Shaykh Ahmad 'Arif al-Zayn and al-'Irfan", in Marwan R. Burheiry, *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890-1939*, p. 120.

This weak position of the Shi'i *ulama* in the Ottoman period influenced the interpretation of the major Shi'i doctrines vis-à-vis the Ottoman state. Consequently, a distinction was drawn from the Iranian religious classes. This was the result of the different historical experience that both religious categories enjoyed vis-à-vis the central authority. In the Safavid Iran, the Shi'i religious categories were incorporated into the state apparatus.<sup>50</sup> They acted so as to implement state policies and thus legitimise the central authority.<sup>51</sup> Hence, the Iranian *ulama* taught, elaborated on, and propagated the *Imamite* doctrine so as to fit an official Shi'i state.<sup>52</sup> When the power of the Safavid *Shahs* became seriously crippled, religious scholars had no longer to comply with the dominant notion of the Safavid rulers as representatives of the Hidden *Imam*. With the rise of the Qajar dynasty in Iran, Shi'i autonomy vis-à-vis the state was reasserted.<sup>53</sup> In the face of a precarious central authority, the power of the *ulama* was substantially reinforced in that, throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these represented an autonomous class with a strong leadership as well as organisational coherence. While the *ulama* challenged the divine authority of the *Shah*, in a way they were successful in assuming religious authority for themselves. The long experience of quietism that the *ulama* had experienced under the Safavids influenced the consolidation of their position within Qajar Iran; they developed a spirit of defiance towards the state while at the same time they became strictly devoted to religious and theological issues.<sup>54</sup> At a

<sup>50</sup> The Safavid state-structure was based on a fusion between the religious and the temporal dimensions of authority. This was revealed in the institutions of the state; the office of *Sadr*, a political appointee standing as the head of the religious classes; his duty was to eradicate any heresy and to contribute to the state's attempts to bring doctrinal uniformity; added to the role of *Sadr*, was the position of the *vicegrant* of the *Shah* who was the one responsible for the state and religious affairs. For more details on these positions, see Niki Keddie, *Religion and Politics in Iran: Shi'ism from Quietism to Revolution*, U.S.: Yale University Press, 1983, p. 38.

<sup>51</sup> The Shi'i *ulama* throughout the Safavid rule represented a class highly dependent on state patronage; they benefited from state appointment to political offices and from state endowments of religious shrines. They functioned so as to legitimise the authority of the central government, supporting and implementing the Safavid policies of persecution against tribal and religious rivals. Moreover, these *ulama* held a high degree of authority among the population, acting as intermediaries between the central authority and the population. See Ira Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, p. 543.

<sup>52</sup> See C. Melville, *Safavid Persia: the History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, London: I.B.Tauris, 1996, p.140. On the elaboration of the *Imami* doctrine during the Safavids, See also, P.M.Holt, Ann K. S. Lambton, Bernard Lewis, *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Volume I: *The Central Islamic Lands*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1970, p.p.401-403.

<sup>53</sup> This was achieved mainly through the reaffirmation of the Shi'i millenarian expectation of the hidden *Imam* who would establish his personal rule only at the End of Time;

<sup>54</sup> The dominant debate of the period was that between the *Akhbari* and the *Usuli* Schools of Jurisprudence; this revealed the newly acquired freedom of the religious categories from state control. Throughout the early Safavid period, the *Usuli* School emerged to assume the involvement of *mujtahids*



later stage, the Iranian *ulama* reacted against European encroachment and got involved in the forthcoming major crises.<sup>55</sup> The weak state structure allowed for the consolidation of an active class of *ulama* capable of resisting the state, as well as mobilising strong popular support, when needed. At another level, the independent power of the Iranian *ulama* to oppose the state could be explained within the Shi'i religious context; within the latter context, resistance becomes synonymous with the struggle for justice and the eradication of evil. The role of the *ulama* to act as the only legitimate authorities in the absence of the *Imam* was associated with the paradigm of Husein. In this paradigm, the obligation to resist tyranny and to struggle in the name of worldly justice would ensure messianic redemption.

On the other hand, the abstention of the Ottoman Shi'i religious classes from political affairs could be understood through the Shi'i political theory of *wilaya al-faqih*; that is, the role of the religious leaders to fill the gap that emerged out of the absence of the *Mahdi*. The doctrine was reiterated under the unfavourable circumstances of the Sunni Ottoman authority. Consequently, the Shi'ites did not need to justify the existence of the state after the death of the Prophet. They constructed their main doctrine of the Occultation so as to prove the continuation of the sacred Islamic order, after the death of the Prophet, as long as the *Imam* was there to guide the community. In the absence of the *Imam*, the religious classes could act in its name. The conduct of political affairs however, remained a prerogative of the *Imam*. The Sunni communal unity was always related to the legitimation of the ruler's authority. Within this prevalent context, the Shi'i religious classes, deprived of any say in the Ottoman order of things, acted so as to save the social bonds of the community. Through *taqiyya*, the *ulama* placed themselves as a bridge between the

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(Shi'i highest religious category) in a wide array of roles, legitimating both the communal consensus and the *ulama* role as a proxy of the Hidden *Imam*, even during the period of the *Imam*'s Occultation. Thus, Shi'i laypersons ought to emulate *mujtahids*, as their authority was derived out of their expertise in understanding the *Qur'an* and the tradition of Ali. During this period, the *Usulis* tied themselves to the authority of the *Shah*, in exchange for appointments in high positions. The emergence of the *Akhbari* School came as a response to the rising power of the *ulama*; it focused on the infallibility of the *Imams* that dominated over the interpretative role of the *ulama*. The *Akhbari* rejected both the concept of *ijma*, or consensus of the community and the practice of reason as incompatible with the authority of the *Imam*; instead, they focused on the sayings of the *Imams* as the main sources, providing an infallible interpretation of the *Qur'an*. In effect, what this debate proved was that the *ulama* came out of their quiescence to devote themselves to the fruitful development of religious thought. For more details on the *Usuli-Akhbari* debate, see, J.R. I. Cole & N.R. Keddie, *Shi'ism and Social Protest*, Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1986, p.p. 8-9.

<sup>55</sup> The Qajar efforts to modernise and secularise the state, coupled with the European encroachment in the Iranian economy, led to the tobacco monopoly protests, in 1891-1892, in which the *ulama* had an active political involvement. Moreover, the constitutional crisis of 1906 revealed the precariousness of the relationship between the state and the *ulama* in Iran.

community and the government, allowing a minimum of participation in the conduct of public affairs. In effect, the Shi'ites of Jabal Amil and Bekaa condemned any form of government existing in the absence of the *Imam* as unrighteous and unjust. Through the practice of *taqiyya*, the Shi'ites allowed themselves a minimum measure of contact with those possessing power; however, for a particular purpose and without carrying any responsibility for the presence of a tyrannical government.<sup>56</sup> Thus, the Shi'ites could live within the bounds of the Ottoman Sunni State yet without accepting the legitimacy of the Ottoman Islamic system itself.

In the aftermath of Shi'i destruction by al-Jazzar, Shi'i identity was shaped along the lines of political seclusion and defeat. Through the practice of *taqiyya* the Shi'ites developed an introverted relationship with their history, on the one hand, while on the other, they found the strength to exist as a community outside the bounds of central authority. Thus, *taqiyya* functioned so as to reaffirm the sovereignty of the community as opposed to the sovereignty of the Sunni State. Moreover, it became an instrument of social control the community would need, so as to sustain itself in particular unfavourable political circumstances.

## 1.5 Conclusion

The chapter situated Shi'i identity within the particular historical and socio-political context out of which Shi'i myths and symbols and Shi'i religious identity were constructed, separately from the mainstream Sunni religious identification. The separate Shi'i myths and symbols were constructed out of a process of interaction with the prevalent Sunni social and political context, adjusting to the Shi'i position within it. The detachment of the *Caliphal* State from divine authority and its attachment to political ends pushed the partisans of Ali to the margins of both state and society. They responded to this marginal position by constructing their separate myths and symbols and a distinctive source of identity, so as to articulate this position. Thus, the notion of *Imam*, and the esoteric concepts of *'ilm* and *nass*, as well as the practice of *taqiyya*, were responses to real or perceived unjust rule. Vis-à-vis the exoteric Sunni doctrines traditionally attached to the

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<sup>56</sup> See Abbas Kelidar, "The Shii Community and Politics in the Arab East".

sovereignty of the state, the Shi'ites constructed their own esoteric doctrines focused on the sovereignty of the community. Through the construction of their separate myths and symbols, the Shi'ites accommodated themselves to the prevalent context and protected the socio-political bonds of their community. Consequently, Shi'i interaction with the prevalent Sunni establishment was defined in real terms, as both groups existed within the same socio-political contexts. Far from an abstract perception of the Sunni community as 'other', within such a context Shi'i religious identity was clearly and concretely positioned vis-à-vis the prevalent Sunni identity.

The dominant Shi'i position during the Fatimid rule led to a reconstruction of the Shi'i myths and symbols along these lines; thus, the core Shi'i doctrine of the Occultation was formulated and a distinct class of 'religious men' became established as representatives of the Hidden *Imam* on Earth. In addition, the favourable socio-political circumstances led to the establishment of the tombs of Imams as the main places of pilgrimage, unveiling a great emotional power for the Shi'i believers. Moreover, the core Shi'i ritual of *Ashura*, commemorating the death of Husein at the battle of Kerbala became established.

At a next stage, with the domination of a number of Sunni dynasties, Shi'i doctrines were once again positioned on the political and social margins. Thus, the second context presented in the chapter, is one of adjustment of the Shi'i religious identity to the local contexts of Jabal Amil and Bekaa. Within these local contexts, both the act of representation and the represented are changing. Even though the general Shi'i themes of quiescence and revolution still define the identity of the Shi'i populations of both Jabal Amil and Bekaa, the representation of these themes is in a continuous process of interaction with the prevalent local socio-political contexts. For the most part of the Ottoman period, Shi'i populations in both Jabal Amil and Bekaa re-invented their religious myths and symbols on the lines of local homelands, communal struggles with external enemies and local heroes, praised along the Shi'i themes of martyrology. As the Shi'i populations of Jabal Amil and Bekaa were excluded from the Ottoman State and society and always treated with suspicion, they developed a timid and quiescent approach towards politics, as distinguished from the Iranian context.

Consequently, both the religious and local contexts informed the overlapping religious and local components of the Shi'i collective identity. In addition, another vision of history is presented, whereas local socio-political contexts inform religious foci of identification and the other way

round. At a next stage, the thesis will explore the context of the late Ottoman Empire and the way the new loyalties constructed out of the changing socio-political exigencies informed Shi'i historical representation accordingly.



## ***2. Shi'i Community within the Changing Ottoman Context***

This chapter will elaborate on the emerging new points of identification and their impact on the historical representation of Shi'i identity. The previous chapter bridged the religious and local contexts out of which both religious and local loyalties defined the collective identity of the Shi'i populations in Jabal Amil and Bekaa. This chapter situates Shi'i identity within the changing historical and socio-political context of the late Ottoman period. Within this changing context, the collective identity of the Shi'i populations in Jabal Amil and Bekaa represents new and old overlapping solidarities. Consequently, the chapter will elaborate on both old and new socio-political contexts out of which the respective old and new allegiances are informed. The main argument is that the new points of identification did not entirely uproot the prior local networks; rather, the new ones complemented and, to a large extent, co-existed with the old foci of identification, the overlapping of both defining Shi'i collective identity.

### ***2.1 Changing Points of Identification: From Tribal to Communal Allegiance***

#### ***2.1.1 The Establishment of Local Identities within the Ottoman Context***

Within the context of the Ottoman Arab provinces, a particular structure was based on the predominance of a closed circle of notable families, acting as intermediaries between the diverse population and the central Ottoman state. Relations of personal dependence between patron and client were established, on the basis of exchange of support for protection.<sup>1</sup> Hence, an impoverished rural population was attached to powerful local landowners for the provision of a wide range of services. Within a structure divided between artisans and urban patrons or between peasants and rural landowners, both the artisans in the city and the peasants in the rural areas had to produce so as to finance the patron or because he was the one allowing access to the market. The local leader, then, possessed autonomous social power, which he used in order to gain access to

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<sup>1</sup> See Samir Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1987, p.25.



political authority. Thus, relations of give and take were formed between the central authority and the local level. That is, for the local leaders access to authority was what mattered; the autonomous local power of the leader eventually obliged the central authority to allow the needed access.<sup>2</sup>

A particular socio-political context was constructed out of a diversity of communities, each of which represented a closed system of traditions and strictly defined territories. As a way to deal with this diversity, the central authority established a hierarchical structure and elevated local identity as the primary focus of identification. Within this system, Mount Lebanon emerged as a broad coalition of Maronite, Druze and Shi'i local feudal leaders, keen on extending their power base,<sup>3</sup> while at the same time being able "*to oppose the government or else to oblige it to act through them.*"<sup>4</sup> As sectarian loyalties were not very powerful some sort of balance prevented the eruption of major sectarian disturbances.

At the highest level of the hierarchy of Mount Lebanon stood the *Emir*, a single leader and a powerful landlord, appointed by the Ottoman central authority. The *Emir* became the so-called 'prince' of the Mountain, possessing the power to rule the other tax farmers. Between 1590 and 1633, the Ottomans allowed a Druze chief district chief, Fakhr al-Din Ma'an, to establish an autonomous domain, which was extended to the Bekaa and the interior of Syria as far as Palmyra. They, also, gave him sufficient revenues so as to maintain an effective private army. In 1697, the rule of Mount Lebanon passed to the Shihab family, which ruled only the predominantly Maronite part of Mount Lebanon. The remaining districts of the coastal mountain, Tripoli, Sidon, Beirut, the Bekaa Valley and the southern parts of Jabal Amil, were formally under the jurisdiction of the Ottoman governors of Sidon and Damascus.

At the next level of the hierarchy, Mount Lebanon was a semi-autonomous socio-economic and political entity, constituted of several districts. In these districts, political authority was allocated among autonomous feudal chiefs, the *muqati'jis*, and a set of local noble families who exercised hereditary rule. The source of identification, cut across confessional lines, was defined in terms of allegiance first to the *muqati'ji* and then to the *Emir*. Consequently, one's social place was defined

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<sup>2</sup> See Albert Hourani, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, London: Macmillan & St. Antony's College, Oxford, 1981, p.p. 41-42.

<sup>3</sup> An eloquent description of the existing balance of power, by the eighteenth century, is presented in the letter of the French Consular of Sidon to the King of France, in Adel Ismail, *Documents Diplomatiques et Consulaires Relatif à l'Histoire du Liban*, vol.2, p.p. 302-303.

<sup>4</sup> Nazih Ayubi, *Over-Stating the Arab State : Politics and Society in the Middle East*, p. 70.

according to his allegiance to the *muqati'ji*'s house, being both his subject and his follower. In order to maintain his dominant position within society and political life, the *muqati'ji* had to ensure a strong and loyal following.<sup>5</sup>

The prevailing organisation in the Shi'i areas constituted of a number of Shi'i notable families that stood as the primary loci of identification. These leading Shi'i families, owners of local fiefdoms, existed away from the coastal plain and did not possess the power and the status of the Shihabs. Between the sixteenth and the late eighteenth centuries, in the northern Bekaa, it was the Shi'i families of Hamada and Harfush that collected the taxes. During the second part of the seventeenth century, in the northern part of Mount Lebanon, the Hirmil, the powerful Shi'i family of Hamada exercised their rule over an extended domain, including the Maronite lands of the northern Lebanon, except for the Kisrawan. The encroachment and subsequent reinforcement of the Maronite church in the region of Kisrawan reduced the power of the Hamada clan. In 1759 the Maronites expelled them and established a Shihabi governor. In the south, a set of Shi'i clans had dominated the population of Jabal Amil since the Mamluk period. In 1705, when *Emir* Bashir became the governor of Saida, Safad and Jabal Amil were detached from the Shuf of Mount Lebanon. Subsequently, Safad and Acre were given to *Shaykh* Dahir al-Umar, the prominent tribal chief who became powerful, partly due to the serious decline of the Ottoman rule. The notable Shi'i families and clans attached themselves to him and ignored the Ottoman rule.<sup>6</sup>

Consequently, extended family existed as the primary socio-economic and political unit. Shi'i identity signified a wide range of affiliations to categories such as the segmentary lineage, the clan and the tribe.<sup>7</sup> At another level, the category of tribe overlapped with the category of peasantry; the latter category, signified a broader socio-economic unit, inclusive of the tribe itself. In addition

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<sup>5</sup> See Iliya Harik, *Politics and Change in a Traditional Society: Lebanon 1711-1845*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, p.p. 42-43.

<sup>6</sup> Fuad Ajami gives an eloquent picture of the situation of Shi'i in Acre under al-Umar's rule, "it was in Dahir al Umar's dominion, in the city of Acre, where the cotton then grown in Jabal Amil was marketed. From Acre, French traders of Marseilles operated, made loans to the growers, and bought their crops. The place knew a period of relative prosperity. Dahir al Umar respected the workings of the system of clans and notables. He took his share and left the Shia world to itself." Fuad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr & the Shia of Lebanon*, p.p.53-54.

<sup>7</sup> M.E. Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East, 1792-1923*, London and New York: Longman, 1987, p.4.

apart from the family, the peasantry identified with the village, inclusive of the family lineage and family history itself.<sup>8</sup>

In the period up to 1840, when the feudal system was brought to an end, the clash between the rules of kinship and those of authority usually induced the competition amongst the various political actors. Serious divisions emerged even within the context of the same clan itself, undermining in this way its unity. The prevalence of individual rule, coupled with the distribution of the fiefs to the various heirs of the same feudal family, ensured a fragmented social and political space amongst various independent centers of power. At a subsequent stage, the various heirs were to become single chiefs (*muqati'jis*) in their respective fiefs.

The established relations of mutual dependence between the *Emir* and the class of feudal lords worsened the existing internal factionalism. The feudal lords (*manasib*) collectively elected the *Emir*. Subsequently, in order to maintain his power, the *Emir* had to comply with the interests of the *muqati'jis*. In turn, as the *Emir* was the primary source of authority within Mount Lebanon, the *muqati'jis* competed with each other for influence over the *Emir*.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, the rivalry among the *manasib* allowed *Emir*'s active interference in their affairs. Hence, in an effort to save his own authority, the *Emir* posed several obstacles to unity.

The main conflicts of *Qaysi-Yamani*,<sup>10</sup> as well as the *Jumblati-Yazbaki*,<sup>11</sup> reflected the internal contradictions of the feudal system itself. The intensity of internal rivalry was largely defined by

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<sup>8</sup> M.E. Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East, 1792-1923*, p.p.2-5.

<sup>9</sup> See Iliya Harik, Iliya Harik, *Politics and change in a Traditional Society: Lebanon 1711-1845*, p.p. 66-71.

<sup>10</sup> The '*Qaysi*' and '*Yamani*' factions are terms referring to the Arab tribal division early in Islamic history. The *Qaysi-Yamani* conflict in Mount Lebanon represented a long-standing division of the leading Druze families, in their struggle for predominance. Within the context of this division, the Ma'ans and the Shihabs adhered to the *Qaysi* faction while the family of Alam al-Din led the *Yamanis*. The Alam al-Din family opposed the succession of Haydar Shihab, in 1707. In 1711, the Shihabs supposedly with the backing of Jumblats won the *Yamanis* in Ayn Dara. This outcome reinforced the Jumblatti position within Lebanon. Since then, the other *Yamanis* left Mount Lebanon and settled in Southern Syria, an area known as Jabal al-Druze.

<sup>11</sup> This conflict erupted later in the eighteenth century, during the period of the Shihabist territorial expansion in northern Mount Lebanon. In the 1750s, the Maronite and Sunni peasants rebelled against their Shi'i overlords, the Hamadas, and managed by 1759 to expel the Hamadas from Bsharri and the Akkar. Both the Maronites and the Hamadas had sought assistance from the *Emirate*; the Maronites asked *Emir* Mansur Shihab to intervene and the Hamadas turned to the *Yazbaki* Druze faction so as to restrain Mansur. The Hamadas succeeded in exploiting the new Druze factionalism. The Hamadas allied with the *Yazbakis*. In their attempt to undermine the power of both Mansur and the *Yazbakis*, the *Jumblatis* allied with Mansur's rival for the leadership of the *Emirate*, Yusuf Shihab.



the role of each clan in the politics of the *Emirate*.<sup>12</sup> The most powerful clans did not hesitate to resort to the extensive use of violence towards the destruction of actual or potential contenders. At the same time, in its attempt to undermine the autonomous status of Mount Lebanon, the Ottoman government, at various instances, destabilised the existing balance of power by playing rival clans off against each other.

In the Shi'i areas no region was the exclusive fief of a sole family but of family alliances that represented a form of regional government. The main element of any form of administration was the element of 'bi-clanism'. The leading families fought with each other for predominance in the region. One amongst them, the Ali al-Saghir clan, established its hegemony over the rest due to the political alliances its members formed and their particular place in the communal imagery.<sup>13</sup> The partisans of each party cohabited within the same village, which was organised on a minimum of exchange. What was common in Shi'i villages was the predominance of families, which constituted two opposing axes of familial alliances. These were traditionally the most important proprietors of land and the ones who dominated the whole village. Last, the confrontation between these families reinforced the tribal and clannish identifications of the Shi'i population, as the Shi'i peasants did not have any alternative other than to place themselves in one, or the other alliance.

### ***2.1.2 Internal and External Pressures Intermeshed: Communal Identities Reaffirmed***

The rapid political developments from 1840 onward allowed for new relations of power and new foci of identification to co-exist with the previous ones. The European concept of state as the only legitimate agent for the formulation and implementation of policy re-defined the Ottoman decentralised system. As European powers could see in this system nothing else than the seeds of a decayed system, "*they bent their efforts towards obliging the Near East to conform to their own notions of how states should behave, and in doing so contributed to the disappearance of the old*

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<sup>12</sup> This means that, "internal rivalry was considerable in clans which played a vigorous role in Imarah politics and comparatively minor in those houses which were less active." Iliya Harik, *Politics and change in a Traditional Society: Lebanon 1711-1845*, p. 45.

<sup>13</sup> See Mounzer Jaber, *Pouvoir et société dans le Jabal Amel de 1740 à 1920 dans la conscience des chroniqueurs chiites et dans un essai d'interprétation*, p. 254.

system.”<sup>14</sup> With the *Tanzimat* reforms, introduced in 1839, the notion of the ‘Ottoman identity’ was constructed as a defensive mechanism towards an increasing European encroachment in the Ottoman affairs. The concept of Ottoman citizenship defined a more centralised administration that would be directly and equally applied to each citizen. These ideas came in a period of Ottoman decline, when there was a wide acknowledgement on behalf of the Ottoman statesmen that in order “to save the empire, a new egalitarian citizenship and concept of patriotism, *Osmanlik* or ‘Ottomanism’, had to be created.”<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, by establishing a system based on a western vision of nationhood, the Ottoman State legitimised European involvement in Ottoman affairs and created a balance most favourable to external interests.

In Mount Lebanon, the Ottoman discriminatory politics disrupted the relationship between the Maronites and the Druzes. Moreover, the abolition of the feudal system, in 1840, brought the previous feudal overlords back to their sectarian identifications, as the only way to maintain their strong position and interests. Thus, an alternative but equally exclusive hierarchy was gradually established, based on the notion of sect as a ‘nation’. The changing sectarian balance of power allowed the transference of the existing tribal and clannish affiliations of the population to their respective sectarian community.

In order to counterbalance the European economic penetration, the increasingly insecure elites adopted a religion-based political practice and appealed to the major European powers for protection. In an effort to establish their own ascendancy, the European powers responded immediately and took under their protection whole communities. The growing European interest in the various communities of Mount Lebanon brought to the forefront the increasingly blurred boundaries between the internal and external channels of authority. The Shi’i community however, did not attract any such interest; France maintained its traditional links with the Maronite community; Russia became a protector of the Christian Orthodox community; Britain of the Druzes; and the Sunni community continued to enjoy the patronage of the Ottoman Empire. Qajar Iran showed an interest in the Shi’ites of the Ottoman Empire. However, due to the bad relations

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<sup>14</sup> Yapp, M.E., *The Making of the Modern Near East, 1792-1923*, p. 45

<sup>15</sup> Roderic H. Davison, “Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century”, in A.Hourani, P.S.Khoury & M.Wilson, *The Modern Middle East*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1983, p. 67.



of the Qajar Iran with the Ottomans, the Shi'ites of Jabal Amil and Bekaa did not benefit from the Iranian connection.

The establishment of the system of the double *qa'imqamiyya*, in the aftermath of the Maronite-Druze warfare, in 1843, split Mount Lebanon into the northern part under a Christian governor and the southern under a Druze. Under this arrangement, the Shi'ites were placed under the Druze authority. In fact, this arrangement legitimised religion as a source of identification, while it did nothing to alleviate the existing sectarian tension. This latent tension culminated with the eruption of open warfare, in 1860, and the massacres of the Maronites by the Druzes, bringing the intervention of the European powers. What began as a revolt of Maronite peasants against Maronite *muqata'jis* in the north, gradually spilled over to the Druze areas, eventually taking a communal form. Stirred by the reasserted Maronite church, Maronite peasants rose to struggle against the Druze feudal lords. The Druzes then retaliated violently and in the subsequent clashes a large number of Maronites were killed and died of starvation, while the conflict spread up to Damascus.

The rising internal and external pressures, while eroding the pre-existing attachments, did not break these instantly. In fact, these strains uprooted the population from the centre of authority and led them to identify simultaneously with diverse loci, their religious groups as well as their traditional chiefs. Within this context, the Shi'ites only sporadically got involved in the warfare; and whenever they did get involved, they aligned themselves with either the one or the other of the contending groups, abstaining from any coherent stance. The localist nature of the Shi'i community, their preoccupation with the affairs of their respective areas, Jabal Amil and the Bekaa, did not leave a lot of room for their involvement in affairs perceived as 'external', dealing with the Maronite and Druze political predominance. In addition, up until then, Mount Lebanon was the manifestation of primarily Druze and Maronite interests. Throughout their history the Shi'ites were placed to the margins of Mount Lebanon. Consequently, the community was defined in terms of local families of notables which, in their attempt to ensure their interests, aligned with either the Maronite or the Druze camp. In effect, the attachments of the Shi'i mass population were induced according to the temporal alliances of their respective local chiefs.

In the villages of the Bekaa, the Shi'i inhabitants had some ample grounds to oppose the Christians due to the formers' stormy relationship with the Christian Catholic population of

Zahleh. In particular, the Greek Catholics of Zahleh attacked the Shi'ites of the Bekaa region. Even before 1840, the Greek Catholics of Zahleh had killed a Shi'i *Shaykh* of the Harfush clan in Ba'albek and assaulted his followers. Due to their alliance with the Druzes throughout the Druze-Christian clashes in 1840-1841, the Shi'ites were attacked by the inhabitants of Zahleh in 1844.<sup>16</sup> In addition, the Greek Catholic population of Zahleh had outraged both the Shi'ites and the Druzes by interfering in disputes with Christians in neighbouring Shi'i villages.<sup>17</sup> However, the Shi'ites and the Greek Catholics of Zahleh were not always enemies. In 1841 the latter appealed to the Harfush *Emirs* and Shi'i tribesmen from the Ba'albek and they fought together against the Druzes. The fluctuated relationship between the Shi'ites of Bekaa and the population of Zahleh, from open animosity to collaboration, reflected the prevalent informal alliances that, at time, overrode sectarian allegiances. Overall though, as the Greek Catholics of Zahleh were powerful landowners in the villages of Bekaa, they instigated the reaction of their predominantly Shi'i tenants, who channeled their adversity into an alliance with the Druzes.<sup>18</sup>

South of Mount Lebanon, close to the warring districts, only sporadic clashes went on, compared to the mixed districts of the mountain. In these clashes the Shi'ites were either allied with the Druzes against Christian villagers, acted on their own, or fought against the Druzes. At the end of July 1860, the Shi'ites in the hills first joined the Druzes to plunder neighbouring Christian villages and then continued on their own. At one occasion the large village of Bassa, in the Acre plain and the village of Kfar Biraan near Safad were plundered, and three Christians were killed in the latter. At the same time, Shi'ites and Druzes fought one another. North of these villages, at Jbaa near Sidon, Druzes attacked and wounded the religious chief of all the Shi'ites of the region, provoking war between the two sects.<sup>19</sup>

The institutional arrangements at the end of the war heralded the notion of Lebanon as an official separate entity, internationally recognised, and no longer existing as a mere geographic expression. At another level, with the establishment of the *Mutesarrifate*, the sect was institutionalised as a point of identification. The disintegration of the tribal order allowed for the

<sup>16</sup> See, Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion For War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860*, p. 36.

<sup>17</sup> Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion For War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860*, p. 64.

<sup>18</sup> Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion For War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860*, p. 36.

<sup>19</sup> See, Mikhayil Mishaqa, *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage, and Plunder: The History of the Lebanon in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, p. 241.

construction of a new system within which membership in a community, rather than membership in clan or tribe, became the main source of political solidarity. Last, in the traditional order the authority and legitimacy was more a continuing condition, supported by a whole system of social values that ensured the maintenance of authority from generation to generation. In the new system, legitimacy was stirred dynamically “...by direct appeal to the individual for emotional commitment to the national group and by rational efforts to see that his behavior conformed with the imperatives of this commitment.”<sup>20</sup>

## ***2.2 New points of Shi’i identification in the Late Ottoman Context***

### ***2.2.1 Erosion of the Established Shi’i Channels of Identification***

In June 1861, the *Réglement Organique* granted Mount Lebanon an administrative autonomy under the Ottoman sovereignty. This arrangement introduced for the first time a separate Shi’i juridical personality. The community was represented in the administrative council, which assisted the government. Outside Mount Lebanon, in the provinces of Bekaa and Saïda, the Shi’ites were to be governed by the *Wali* of Damascus, designated by the Ottoman central authority.

In the South, the socio-economic cleavages continued to deepen as a result of the tobacco monopoly regulation, instituted in 1833 by the Ottomans. The new regulation benefited the possessors of grand domains to the detriment of the most disinherited. The passing of the Shi’i regions to direct Ottoman administration exacerbated the situation of the predominantly Shi’i agrarian population. In an effort to counterbalance the rising external pressures, the direct Ottoman administration ended the liberty of tobacco cultivation in the area of Jabal Amil; it imposed a policy of fixed market pricing and limited the authorisation of cultivation by land proprietors. Hence, the small peasants, especially in peripheral villages in which grand families were nearly

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<sup>20</sup> Iliya Harik, *Politics and change in a Traditional Society: Lebanon 1711-1845*, p. 286.

absent, became even more dependant upon the grand proprietors, who had practically the sole authority to divide the land according to their convenience.<sup>21</sup>

During this period, rapid socio-political developments enhanced the existing gap between the Shi'i regions and the neighbouring areas of Mount Lebanon. The new Ottoman arrangement that had placed the south into a new province, with Beirut as a capital, further marginalised Jabal Amil and Bekaa. Mount Lebanon and Beirut became the leading centres of commercial and economic activity that induced the great interest of the European powers. This opening left the predominantly Shi'i areas, in Jabal Amil and Bekaa, even more isolated, having to cope with the limited resources of their environment, without any prospect for political advantage.

In a period of increasing capitalist penetration, the Shi'i areas largely dependent on agricultural production, were not wholly incorporated into the market economy. At that stage, the capitalist system of production was only gradually established and did not definitely replace the agriculture of subsistence. In fact, the new form of production was integrated within the previous socio-economic structure.<sup>22</sup> A class of traders rose in Beirut to buy the agricultural products the peasants produced, either at very low prices or according to particular exchange arrangements that always ran to the benefit of the traders rather than the producers. Consequently, the Shi'i areas, Jabal Amil in particular as an agricultural area, became gradually organised according to the needs of the regional markets; that is, the commercial class of Beirut and the economies of the neighbouring regions, namely Mount Lebanon, Palestine and Damascus.<sup>23</sup>

In the aftermath of the Ottoman land law, in 1858, the establishment of a new class of financial and judicial bureaucrats further disrupted the authority of the existing landlords. This law rationalised the economic status of Jabal Amil according to European standards; from then on agriculture became a more profitable source of income. At the end of the Harfush leadership in Ba'albek, alternative clans rose to challenge the former tribal classes. This new class was originally "*a mid-to-late nineteenth century group of Jabal Amil grain merchants, a small number of whom made use of the new Ottoman laws to break into the lucrative and more prestigious class*

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<sup>21</sup> W.Charara, *Transformations d'une Manifestation Religieuse dans un Village du Liban-Sud (Ashura)*, p.13.

<sup>22</sup> On the new socio-economic system and its effects on Jabal Amil, see Souha Taraf-Najib, Zrariye, *Village Chiite du Liban-Sud*, p. 39.

<sup>23</sup> See Souha Taraf-Najib, Zrariye, *Village Chiite du Liban-Sud*, p. 29.

of Za'im, through becoming multazims or tax agents and officers of the state."<sup>24</sup> As soon as this class became established, serious conflicts erupted, between its members and the prevalent land owning family of Shukrs. This spilled rapidly over other feudal conflicts between the al-Saghir and the Zayn families, as well as the Sa'bet and the Fahs.<sup>25</sup>

During this period, the establishment of the *Mutessarifate* as a more or less autonomous entity heralded in many respects the future transition to the state of 'Greater Lebanon'. Within this first 'state construct', the role of the Shi'i community became in a way, even if implicit, a part of the political arrangements. Nevertheless, this new Shi'i role in fact failed to produce the expected political benefits for the community. The Shi'ites represented a quite impoverished rural population of sharecroppers in relation to the mountain and the coastal cities, as well as the Sunni Syrian interior. Bound to a handful of oppressive landlords profiting out of tax-collection, the Shi'i mass population was quite detached from the overwhelming social, economic and political developments of the period. These leading Shi'i families failed to take full advantage of the commercial flourishing of Beirut, and they paid lip service to the full integration of the Shi'i areas into the capitalist system, so that the system was often blocked by the lack of additional capital for industrial and commercial investment. In effect, the changes were re-circulated along the same closed circle of rigid elites which stood far away from the wider Shi'i population. The inherent tensions brought within the new situation, actually led to the further alienation of the mass Shi'i population; its prior networks of identification highly disrupted, while going on living on the margins, left with even fewer resources and even greater impoverishment.

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<sup>24</sup> Tarif Khalidi, "Shaykh Ahmad 'Arif al-Zayn and al-'Irfan", in Marwan R. Burheiry, *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890-1939*, p.p. 121-122.

<sup>25</sup> Waddah Charara, *Transformations d'une Manifestation Religieuse dans un Village du Liban-Sud (Ashura)*, p. 12.



### 2.2.2 Shi'i Collective Identity: Local Ottoman and Arab Overlapping Allegiances

Prior to the First World War, the relationship between Ottomanism and Arabism was continuously transformed, under the impact of the major political developments. During this period the majority of Arabs were attached to both Ottomanism and Arabism, while only a minority of extreme Arab nationalists advocated secession from the Ottoman Empire.<sup>26</sup> Less than a fully-fledged nationalism calling for the Arab separation from the Ottoman Empire, Arabism at that point implied a form of proto-nationalism.<sup>27</sup>

At this stage, the mass Shi'i population did not collectively express any outstanding Arabist view, due to the highly localised and isolated context of the Shi'i regions, and the subordination of the mass population to the interests of their local landlords. Hence, the reluctance of this leadership to identify with either the Arab nationalist movement or Ottomanism was what defined Shi'i communal attitude; the mass Shi'i population continued to live highly impoverished and exploited. Within this context, it was only prominent members of the community who voiced sporadic viewpoints vis-à-vis the ideology of Arab nationalism.

Consequently, from 1842 to 1852, the main Shi'i grievances were expressed against the local tax collectors, regarded as the representatives of the government. A popular movement was established in Jabal Amil to call for the removal of the governor Hamad al-Mahmud. From the death of Hamad al-Mahmud, in 1852, up until his successors Ali al-As'ad and his cousin Tamir of the Saghir clan were imprisoned by the Ottoman authorities in 1865, Shi'ites were absorbed in their local affairs. As in their majority these events dealt with the balance of power between the Shi'i local patrons, their effects very rarely exceeded the boundaries of the remote Shi'i regions

However, when the Ottomans imposed direct control in Jabal Amil and the Bekaa, reaction towards the repressive Ottoman policy in these areas cautiously emerged on the surface. In the period from 1865 onwards, Sayyed Muhammad al-Amin achieved a major change in the political stance of the local Shi'i chiefs. During the time of al-Amin, the prior rights of the local *zu'ama* to

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<sup>26</sup> On this approach of Arab nationalism, see R. Khalidi, L. Anderson, R. Simon and M. Muslish, (eds.), *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*. See also, Rashid Khalidi, "Arab Nationalism: Historical Problems in the literature", in *American Historical Review*, December 1991, p.p. 1363-1373.

<sup>27</sup> R. Khalidi, L. Anderson, R. Simon and M. Muslish (eds.), *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, p. 51.

administer the local affairs were for the first time questioned. The Shi'ites did not have effective power so as to use the issue to their advantage. However, the mere fact that the issue was raised and that the most ardent of its supporters were exiled to Tripoli indicated a substantial change in Shi'i attitude.

Throughout the period of Turkish nationalism, Arab nationalism was reified in reaction to the rigid policies of the CUP, which were heavily criticised by Arabists, as threats towards both Arab and Ottoman identities. The same group of Arabists advocated the need for reform and decentralisation, as the only way in which the Empire would sustain foreign encroachment. Far less than a separation from the Ottoman Empire, this attitude indicated a perception of the Arabs themselves as a part of the 'Ottoman nation', as well as their devotion to the maintenance of the Empire.

For a period of time, Arabists could advocate their opposition within the framework of the established Ottoman parties. The atmosphere of political freedom allowed the broadening of the elite with new members coming from the growing middle classes. In an effort to counterbalance the traditional structures, this new leadership became the main channel of reforms and was soon to align itself with the movement of Arab nationalism. It was this new elite that established, in the 1890s, the nascent literary and political societies in both Jabal Amil and Bekaa, dealing with topics strictly censored by the Ottoman State. As the Young Turks' revolution failed to meet the main Arab rights and aspirations, these societies stiffened their opposition against the Young Turks' suppressive policies.

On the other hand, the traditional Arab elites supported Ottomanism, as a way to maintain their established privileges and their clientship of the CUP, especially in view of the threat posed by the new elites. As long as the government needed them, they could in fact function to the shared benefit of both their class and the CUP. During the beginning of this period, *"as Arab nationalists were gaining adherents throughout the Turkish Empire, Shi'ite leaders hesitated to commit themselves to the Arab cause. Too sensitive to the retribution that would surely befall them should they misally themselves, the Shi'ite leaders could not perceive in the events since 1909 any assurance for a successful alliance with either Arabs or Turks."*<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ali el-Khazen, *The Shi'ites of Lebanon*, p.p.142-143.

Rather than a collective Shi'i attitude, Shi'i identification with Arab nationalism was determined by prominent individual members of the community who actively participated in the revolutionary societies. A prominent Shi'i figure, with non-*za'im* background, Abdul Karim, famous in 1877 for his participation in Arab parties and conferences, established, in 1910, 'The Literary Club'. At the Paris Conference, in 1913, he was amongst those who signed the agreement between the Arabs and the CUP. Moreover he established a branch of the Society of Arab Revolt in Sidon. Soon enough, this Society became well known, while its members used the eruption of the First World War so as to undermine Turkish control in Jabal Amil. Eventually, Abdul Karim was convicted of treason and hanged in 1916.

In the period between 1913 and 1914, as the CUP established a firm grip over the institutions of the Ottoman State and society, more and more members of the traditional elites clung around the ideology of Arab nationalism.<sup>29</sup> Since 1914, evident was the fact that "...the world was already at war, and the currents that were to pull the Arab provinces-and with them, however belatedly, the Shi'ites of Jabal Amil into revolt in 1916..."<sup>30</sup>

### 2.3 Representation of Shi'i Allegiances

In 1909, Jabal Amil flourished with the publication of a literary and political journal, *al-Irfan*. This journal became the medium of the newly emerged Shi'i political elite in their attempt to establish their own political status. The emergence of journalism drew a split with the Shi'i past, when the majority of Shi'i political leaders and intelligentsia refrained from any political activity out of fear of persecution. With the overthrow of the *Sultan* in Istanbul, in 1909, the strict Ottoman domination over the Arab provinces significantly decreased, thus creating a free atmosphere.

<sup>29</sup> See the article of Philip S. Khuri "Continuity and Change in Syrian Political Life: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries", in *American Historical Review*, December 1991, p.p. 1374-1395. As he argues, (p. 1386) "by World War I, Arabism was rapidly becoming the ascendant political idea and movement of the times in Syria. Thus, during the War, when many notables began to jump from the sinking Ottoman ship, they grabbed as they fell, the rope of Arab nationalism. They really had no choice. It was this rope that enabled them to enter the interwar years with their political and social influence intact." On the disassociation of the Arab from the Ottoman-Islamic identity as a reaction to the overt Turkification policies of the Young Turks, see, Rifaat Ali Abou-El-Haj, "The Social Uses of the Past: Recent Arab Historiography of Ottoman Rule", in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 14, 1982, p. 185-186.

<sup>30</sup> Ali el-Khazen, *The Shi'ites of Lebanon*, p. 143.

*Al-Irfan* developed a discourse that mirrored the rapid socio-political changes in the society of Jabal Amil; it signified a cautious and timid transition from the traditional ways to what was supposed to be modernism on the basis of Western standards. However, the established ways were not entirely abandoned; it was rather that the new allegiances were adjusted to the established identities. Evidently, struggling to cope with the disruptive changes of its environment, the society of Jabal Amil attempted a closer contact with the outside world. At the same time, the traditional ways and foci of identification were maintained as a defensive mechanism.

Shi'i responses to these various sources of identification, Ottomanism, Turkish nationalism and Arabism indicated a fragmented collective identification. The majority of the Shi'i historiographic accounts of the early twentieth century still dealt with the various individual feudal leaders under the guise of 'heroes', struggling for the cause of Shi'i people. These leaders were regarded as the main agents of change, while very little, if any, reference has been devoted to the Shi'i folk as propagating this change.

Rather than loyalty to the ideology of Arab nationalism per se, the identification or not with Arab nationalism expressed the struggle of power between the local elites. This dimension is demonstrated in the works published by Ali al-Zayn and Muhammad Jabir al-Safa. Al-Safa links his Arab nationalist discourse to the contribution of Kamil bek al-As'ad, as the main representative of the Amilites, 'the heart and soul' of the Arab nationalist cause. His written works became a call for the reparation of the injustices committed to the Arab movement by Turkish rule. On the other hand, Ali al-Zayn "*reflects his family's strong Islamic reformist tradition and its ongoing attempts to contest the political hegemony of the Al-Assads in Jabal Amil.*"<sup>31</sup> Along these lines, he constructs his own discourse, strongly criticising the historiography of al-Safa, as well as the reliability of the Arab movement, and the Amilites' involvement in it. Alternatively, he expresses his ardent support for the Ottoman State as "*...the third of the [central] beliefs after the belief in God and in His Messenger, for it alone preserves the supremacy of religion.*"<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, within the context of the prevalent Shi'i discourse, *al-Irfan* added a new dimension. Through the establishment of Saida as the centre of its publication, the journal elevated the whole region of Jabal Amil from an isolated and peripheral region to an important intellectual

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<sup>31</sup> Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community*, p. 26.

<sup>32</sup> Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community*, p.26.



centre. The publisher of *al-Irfan*, Ahmad Arif al-Zayn, resisted the prospect of publishing the journal in Beirut. Consequently, he opted for Saida and not Beirut and ensured that Saida would be connected early enough with the minds of the readers.

However, the established discourse of the journal treated general religious matters in clear disjunction from political issues. There was a certain linkage of the journal to the wider context of Shi'ism but in the general sense of "*an attitude of mind rather than a sectarian commitment.*"<sup>33</sup> The articles presented in the pages of *al-Irfan*, dealt with the role of Shi'ism in Arab history, as well as the heroic struggles of Ali and his descendants. At the same time, an increasing discourse was constructed, based on an "*occasional criticism of the Shi'ites themselves for their straight-laced traditionalism with the deplorable state of the local economy and the local schools.*"<sup>34</sup> Gradually, the journal became the forum of such contemporary topics as education and welfare. Especially, education of the disadvantaged people became the main focus of the modernist discourse of *al-Irfan*.

Even if the journal did not follow any fixed ideological line and was not aligned with any particular political party, it adjusted both its discourse and contents to the prevailing political developments of the period. Consequently, in the first issue the journal included a series of articles and poems celebrating the declaration of the new constitution. As is argued, during this period "*al-Irfan participated in the Turki-Arab honeymoon, and it was clear that al-Zayn had allied himself with progressive Arab sentiments.*"<sup>35</sup> However, most of the time the journal clearly avoided an outright position vis-à-vis the critical political events of the period. This timid attitude was evident, at a later stage; when a rising feeling of disillusionment emerged, and secret societies rose to support the split with the Ottoman past; moreover, when the CUP led strict policies of intolerance and destruction towards any movement resembling Arab nationalism. Due to the heavy policies of censorship, the publisher of *al-Irfan*, al-Zayn, by adopting a quiescent stance, avoid stating publicly his support for the cause of Arab nationalism.

The isolation of Jabal Amil allowed for the continuation of *al-Irfan*'s publication up until 1915 when it was forced to close. Its closing marked the end of one period and the beginning of a new

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<sup>33</sup> Tarif Khalidi, "Shaykh Ahmad 'Arif al-Zayn and al-'Irfan", in Marwan R. Burheiry, *Intellectual Life in the arab east, 1890-1939*, p.114.

<sup>34</sup> Ali el-Khazen, *The Shi'ites of Lebanon*, p. 200.

<sup>35</sup> Ali el-Khazen, *The Shi'ites of Lebanon*, p. 199.



one. At a later stage, with the establishment of the French Mandate in Lebanon, the journal reopened and since then continued to mediate a new discourse taken out of the new situation. Nevertheless, during this formative period of its publication, and despite the wider changes that were presented in its pages, the journal reproduced a timid and quiescent attitude towards the major political upheavals.

## ***2.4 Conclusion***

The previous chapter demonstrated the adjustment of Shi'i religious identity to the local contexts of Jabal Amil and Bekaa. This chapter focused on the major transformation of this local context and the different inferences this transformation brought to the Shi'i collective identity. Hence, this chapter constructs two different contexts, an old and a new one. Within the old context, Shi'i identity articulated the prevalent balance of political power amongst the local notables. The Shi'i community was closely attached to these local networks of authority that in effect mediated between the community and the central Ottoman administration. Within this context, warfare, conducted amongst the prominent families of local notables, reproduced the local allegiances of the population that predominated over communal loyalties.

However, the wider changing setting of the period from 1840 onward paved the way for a different context to emerge. The interplay between a declining feudal system and an increasing European penetration in the Ottoman affairs rearranged the channels of Shi'i identification. New loyalties were forged to articulate the new socio-political realities; in order to countervail the increasing European pressures, the Ottoman central authority invented the notion of the 'Ottoman identity' as a component indivisible to state authority. The abolition of the feudal system created a new balance of power, with the traditional feudal lords clinging to their respective communal attachments in order to save their position within the changing system. In addition, these changes further alienated the subject population who became attached to their respective communal allegiances. This transitional period culminated with the eruption of communal warfare. In the aftermath of war the prevalent communal attachments were institutionalised, heralding the future state structure of Lebanon. The establishment of the *Mutesarrifate*, in the aftermath of the communal war, re-arranged the boundaries of Shi'i collective identity. First, membership in the

community, rather than membership in the clan or tribe, defined the new system. Second, a new implicit role has been established for the Shi'ites, as the community was represented separately from the Sunnites within the administrative council. Third, the Arab attachments rose to claim a new component of Shi'i identity.

However, the new roles ascribed to the Shi'i community did not completely uproot the previous attachments. Both the new and the old foci of identification continued to co-exist and overlap with each other. The new administrative arrangements, put into effect in the two Shi'i areas of Jabal Amil and Bekaa, were in fact a hybrid of the old feudal system and the new system of European origin. Despite the opening of the Shi'i areas to an increasing commercial and economic activity, the profits gained were re-circulated around a closed circle of local notables. In effect, the overwhelming Shi'i rural population remained the same alienated from politics and society, tied to their local overlords. In addition, when the notion of the Arab national identity was constructed, the local attachments were never totally abandoned; it was rather that the new Arab allegiances were adjusted to the local logic of power.

Finally, the historical representation of these new Shi'i allegiances reflected the same blurred boundaries between old and new contexts. The journal of *al-Irfan* mirrored the overwhelming changes, on the one hand. On the other, the journal clearly avoided any straightforward attachment to the major political movements of the period, keeping pace with the timid and quiescent Shi'i tradition. At the subsequent stages of state construction, state destruction and warfare, as well as state reconstruction all these overlapping religious, kinship, local, old and new attachments continue to affirm themselves in different ways and under different guises.

## ***PART II***

### ***State Construction in Lebanon***

### ***3. Shi'i Community and State building in Lebanon***

This chapter bridges the Ottoman and Mandate past of Lebanon with the construction of the independent state. The case of the Shi'i population of Lebanon demonstrates a different version of state formation and state building; far from the traditional notion of national identity, collective identity draws from a substantial overlapping between sectarian, kinship and local allegiances. Consequently, identity within the new State of Lebanon went on articulating itself in terms of various overlapping loyalties, as was the case in the Ottoman and Mandate contexts. Within this state context, authority over the distribution of socio-economic rewards, 'national' institutions and 'national' myths and symbols is not an exclusive state prerogative. In Lebanon, and presumably elsewhere, entities other than the state functioned in very similar ways as what has been traditionally labelled as the 'nation state'. However, as has been argued, less than a diversion from the conventional historical paradigm of state building, these components signify a context different from the established European one. Within this new paradigm, state authority was established out of a different historical experience and went on affirming itself through this different experience.

#### ***3.1 A Different Historical Experience of State Formation in Lebanon***

Lebanon came into being in the aftermath of the Second World War; nevertheless, the way the independent Lebanese State was created and the subsequent stage of state building are deeply-rooted in the past experience of the Lebanese entity, within both the Ottoman and the colonial forms of state administration. As a part of the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire, the historic entity of Mount Lebanon became largely defined in terms of various overlapping loyalties, i.e. local, religious, kinship, functioning, most of the time, as mutually reinforcing and in compatibility with each other. With the establishment of the *millet* system and the network of notable families, the Ottoman State managed to superimpose and thus sustain all the diverse attachments of the population, religious, kin-based and tribal.<sup>1</sup> In effect a state and social structure was constructed,

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<sup>1</sup> With the establishment of the *millet* system, the central Ottoman authority institutionalised the various religious identities; it set the boundaries between the different religious communities, while it arranged

based on an enhanced social control, withdrawn from the state itself, while placed in the local level.

During the period of increasing European penetration, the central Ottoman authority realised that, in order to counterbalance European challenge, it had to submit, in one way or another, to the European order of things. Hence, a reification of the notion of the 'state' was launched; new laws, the so-called *Tanzimat* reforms, were promulgated to support state legitimacy. In order to deal with external and internal enemies, including both the European and the local centres of power, the Ottoman State envisaged a more centralised system of administration. To this end, identity was reified in terms of legal rights and duties, intending to forge a sense of shared citizenship amongst the subject population. Nevertheless, neither the external<sup>2</sup> nor the internal enemies<sup>3</sup> were effectively dealt with.

Thus, two incidents of communal warfare in Lebanon, in 1840 and 1860, resulted in the establishment of an administrative entity, the so-called *Mutesarrifate*. Both these incidents of warfare began as a result of a serious crisis<sup>4</sup> in the feudal structure itself. The new institutional arrangements eroded the prevalent system of feudalism by undermining the political predominance of the feudal chieftains. With the *Réglement Organique*, which established the system of the

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each of these communities in a hierarchical relationship to the centre. At the same time, the local foci of identification, such as kinship, tribe, family, village, were superimposed by the central state itself and reified through the establishment of the leading families of notables. These families functioned as a substantial bridge between the central authority and the local population of even the remotest Ottoman provinces.

<sup>2</sup> As Nazih Ayubi maintains, the whole process of modernisation resembled a type of 'defensive modernisation', quite spasmodic and in many respects piecemeal that, instead of keeping European encroachment at bay, led the way for an easier penetration. The increasing need for European trade and finance led the way for a growing dependence of the Ottoman State on the European powers, which took the chance to impose tariff and duty arrangements to their own benefit, while at the expense of the native producers. This fact created a vested interest on the part of the European merchants and financiers that was soon to be transformed into a major influence on the economic and eventually the political affairs of the Ottoman state itself. Nazih N. Ayubi, *Over-Stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*, p. 87

<sup>3</sup> With the implementation of these new laws a new form of local bureaucratic elite became established. Subsequently, this new elite, detaching itself from the Ottoman State, became the main agent of Arab nationalism. The presence of this newly established elite revealed that, "the social control had indeed been wrested from the clutch of the Shaykhs, but the land tenure policies and the new production for export had done little to give social control to the central authorities." Joel Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak states: State Capabilities in the Third World*, p.61.

<sup>4</sup> These were signs of what Migdal describes as "historical crises or turning points" that entail such extensive changes of institutions that uproot the existing ones, rendering them incomprehensible and thus, "irrelevant to broad segments of the population." Joel Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak states: State Capabilities in the Third World*, p.p. 90-91.



*Mutesarrifate*, a new political leadership rose out of the new administration. This new aristocracy was sponsored by the Ottomans and the French and assumed a rationalised role, according to legal and bureaucratic criteria. Moreover, the *Réglement Organique* institutionalised the co-existence of the various communal groups. The proportional representation of the dominant communities in the Administrative Council affirmed the sectarian basis of society, while concealing the existing inter-communal tension, as it did not give predominance to anyone of the competing communities over the rest.

At a later stage, the First World War brought about rapid upheavals that impinged on the way people perceived their identity; the direct implantation of a western system of administration in regions with no previous experience rapidly re-arranged the socio-political interactions. New state boundaries, enclosing culturally plural societies, placed new elites in power, often on an explicitly sectarian or tribal basis, changing both the agents and the structure of power within Greater Lebanon. Nevertheless, there was a sense of continuity in that the same logic of bargaining, on the basis of inter- and intra-sectarian cleavages, prevailed. In fact, the French colonial authorities were not the ones to create the Lebanese confessional system. Through their policies of 'divide and rule', the French reproduced the precarious inter-sectarian balance, as well as the long-standing tribal politics of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>5</sup>

In its struggle to secure its own legitimacy, the French colonial power relegated a part of social control to newly emerged elites, on which it became dependent so as to maintain internal order. By playing off different leaders within each community against each other, the French colonial authorities reproduced the intra-communal and tribal divisions, rendering the various communal groups fairly weak and incapable of posing any direct challenge to their rule. After having established their position in domestic politics with French sponsorship, Sunni Muslim and Maronite Christian elites of strongmen began to espouse what Ayubi defines as, "*a restorative*

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<sup>5</sup> Through the implementation of their political strategies of 'cultural liberalism', the French managed to disguise their own divisive politics that would, as Nazih Ayubi argues, "recognize and exploit the political, social and ethnic divisions of the country they ruled." The political formula they improvised was implemented, at a subsequent stage, from a position of dominance through which they took advantage of the strengths but most importantly the weaknesses of the native societies they came to rule. Nazih N. Ayubi, *Over-Stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*, p.90

form of nationalism, that would lead to the gradual phasing out of the French Mandate and leave them comfortably in power.”<sup>6</sup>

The subsequent arrangement of the National Pact, through which the Independent State of Lebanon became established, reflected the major elite alliances of the colonial period. First, it was a gentleman’s agreement between the two dominant political leaders of the Maronite and the Sunni communities, Bechara al-Khury and Riad al-Solh respectively. Second, both these leaders rose to prominence throughout the Mandate. After they had established their position with the help of the French, these elites sought to transfer their legitimacy to the state level.<sup>7</sup>

In fact, the National Pact embodied all the main attributes which had existed since the Ottoman period and were reproduced, in one way or another, throughout the colonial period. In effect, a rapprochement between the dominant Sunni and Maronite leaders and two separate visions of Lebanese identity prescribed the subsequent dual political character of the Lebanese State, as standing in between the Western and the Arab order. The independent and neutral sovereignty of Lebanon was declared, on the basis of Christian renunciation of the West in exchange for a Muslim repudiation of any Arab alignment. Moreover, the National Pact further institutionalised the confessional proportionality that was first established with the *Réglement Organique* and the *Mutesarrifate*. Thus, confessional representation became established at a multiple of eleven, with a ratio of six to five, six Christian and five Muslim representatives.<sup>8</sup> At this stage, though, a specification needs be made; in demographic terms, the numerical division of the Lebanese population between a Christian and a Muslim segment does not represent reality. Each of these segments are not monolithic, but rather fractured among various different sects,<sup>9</sup> each of which

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<sup>6</sup> Nazih N. Ayubi, *Over-Stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*, p. 93.

<sup>7</sup> As Farid el-Khazen points out, the French authorities implemented effectively and with great ease their divisive policies on both the Maronite and Sunni political actors, “since in each major Sunni city and within the Maronite community it was always possible to find politicians willing to challenge local rivals for either personal, family, or clan reasons.” Farid el-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities: The Making and Politics of the National Pact*, Papers on Lebanon, no. 12, October 1991, Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, p. 32.

<sup>8</sup> The favourable representation of the Christians, while in no case did it demonstrate the demographic reality of the period, was perceived as a concession on the part of the Muslims and a reassurance of Christian security within an overwhelmingly Muslim region.

<sup>9</sup> According to J.C. Hurewitz’s estimation, “among the ten or more Christian communities, three account for nearly 90% of the total: the Maronite, and Greek Orthodox, and the Greek Catholics (a uniate church, also affiliated with the Vatican, but employing Greek as its language of worship). To the Muslim communities, divided principally between the Sunnis and the Shi’is—who together represent more than 85%

counts as a separate group in its own right. In political terms, the Lebanese political system was constructed in terms of 'unity in diversity', rather than on the premises of a politically dominant group. Also, Lebanon does not have any single, even numerically small but politically powerful community which is capable of enforcing any coercive policies; in effect, the combination of these factors rules out the subordination of any communal group to the grip of one dominant group.<sup>10</sup>

The very nature of both the National Pact and the subsequent Independent State of Lebanon were to some extent determined by internal forces, in terms of visualisation. However, the Pact was implemented at a subsequent period, in the aftermath of the Second World War, when the external balance of power, especially between the British and the French colonial authorities, began to show signs of change. The subsequent distribution of political power amongst the various sects of 'Greater Lebanon' was devised and implemented with the assistance of external actors, an outcome of negotiations between Lebanese and Egyptian political leaders as well as the French and the British representatives. Less than a spontaneous form of agreement, intending to bring an emotional bond between the diverse communities within Lebanon, the National Pact was a pragmatic arrangement. It was based on political deliberation, while quite elitistic in two important ways; first, it was brokered at the higher level of the political elite, leaving out the mass population. Next, in great measure it revealed the vested interests of the two dominant communities within Lebanon, mainly the Sunni Muslims and the Maronite Christians. Hence, the Pact substantially ignored the remaining communities, which were also a part of 'Greater Lebanon'.

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of the non Christians-may be added the post-Islamic Druzes. Under these circumstances, no individual sectarian group can claim a majority or ever hope to attain one, since the Maronite community (the largest), numbers less than 30% of the country's overall population, and the Sunni community (the second largest) less than 25%." J.C.Hurewitz, "Lebanese Democracy in Its International Setting." In Leonard Binder, *Politics in Lebanon*, p.p. 215-216.

<sup>10</sup> See, Farid el-Khazen, "Lebanon's Communal Elite-Mass Politics: The Institutionalisation of Disintegration", *The Beirut Review*, no. 3. Spring 1992, p.p. 55-56.

### ***3.2 Shi'i Communal Boundaries within 'Greater Lebanon'***

#### ***3.2.1 Shi'i Community under the French Mandate in Lebanon***

In the struggle for Arab independence, the religious classes and the intelligentsia were the main representatives of the Shi'i community. In 1916, the 'Revolutionary Arab Movement', organised in Saida by Shi'i revolutionary members, became dispersed and eventually collapsed. This was due to the strong opposition coming from the traditional feudal leadership which, feeling threatened by the new centres of power, denounced the Arab committees to the Turk authorities. Nevertheless in 1918, prominent Shi'i figures participated in the provisional nationalist governments, established in Saida and Tyre. When the end of the Ottoman Empire became imminent, a Shi'i family of local notables, the As'ads, became attached to the government of King Faisal having, at a prior stage, accepted Faisal's guaranties of a prominent role in any future arrangement. Overall, however, the feudal elite was fractured, with some of its members falling for the French promises for prominence within a state structure under French tutelage. Nonetheless, when the real French intentions became evident, a growing Shi'i activism and struggle against both the French and their Maronite allies was formed.<sup>11</sup>

In August 1920, the French announced the creation of Lebanon, as a separate state from Syria, with extended borders that included the predominantly Shi'i areas of Jabal Amil and Bekaa.<sup>12</sup> The more or less arbitrary arrangement of the boundaries between Syria and Lebanon influenced both Shi'i regions, as for centuries these existed as a single area with the Syrian hinterland. In the new situation, the community was included within the new state boundaries of Lebanon, of which the Shi'ites had nothing more than painful memories of continuous struggles and persecutions. On the other hand, the loss of Bekaa and Tripoli to Lebanon outraged Syria and became a point of tension between Syria and Lebanon on several occasions throughout the French Mandate. Bekaa in

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<sup>11</sup> For details on the Shi'i communal struggles in the period prior to the imposition of the French Mandate, see Jacques Seguin, *Le Liban-Sud: Espace Périphérique, Espace Convoité*, p.p.38-42.

<sup>12</sup> While during the Ottoman period Mount Lebanon covered a territory of 4,500 square kilometres, 'Greater Lebanon' was constructed to cover approximately 10,400 square kilometres. According to Jacques Senguin, within this expanded territory, the Shi'i population rose from representing 5% of the total population of Mount Lebanon, in 1913, to 18,75%, in 1920. Jacques Seguin, *Le Liban-Sud: Espace Périphérique, Espace Convoité*, p.p. 42-44.



particular, was treated as an inseparable part of Syria, as in the past it was a part of the *wilaya* of Damascus, while in the period between 1918 and 1920 it came under the administration of Faisal's Arab government. Consequently, the annexation of Bekaa by the French aimed at securing their own domination over the area to the satisfaction of their Maronite clients.<sup>13</sup>

Having to cope with the awkward disruption of their traditional links with Syria, the Shi'ites at first manifested their strong opposition to the French occupation. At a later stage, the Shi'ites reluctantly accepted the proclamation made by the French High Commissioner, General Gouraud, of the 'Great Lebanon.' The new state structure was regarded as a product of the Christian and especially the Maronite convenience; being unwilling to perceive themselves as a part of a state that would comprise Syria and Lebanon, the Maronites opted for a state in which they could dominate demographically and politically. Hence, they preferred to be a part of the smaller Lebanese State where they constituted the largest community. The Shi'ites, on the other hand, mobilised on the lines of Arab nationalism and Arab unity, turned their eyes to Syria, an Arab and Muslim state, with which they claimed Lebanon should unite in a federation. These Shi'ites tolerated, but with great reluctance, their placement under the tutelage of a foreign Christian power, seeing an exchange of sentiment of Ottomanism, so much loathed, for a sentiment of Occidentalism, non-Muslim, yet more disruptive in cultural terms and thus even more humiliating in their eyes. The expression of these feelings though became the privilege of a limited circle of notable families, who saw in the new situation a threat to their established status; however, their own positions and attitudes still reflected and were determined by their prevalent rivalries rather than anything else. Especially during the beginning of the Mandate, this Shi'i political elite did not hesitate to manifest its resentment and at times organise active resistance against the French.

Nevertheless, this Shi'i hostility towards the French Mandate rapidly dissipated when the Shi'ites perceived the advantages that the community would gain out of the new situation. According to the new institutional arrangements, the Shi'i community was represented in the administrative Council, participating in the legislative Chamber.<sup>14</sup> For their part, the Shi'i notables,

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<sup>13</sup> For more information on Syrian claims over the Bekaa, See Meir Zamir, *Lebanon's Quest: The Road to Statehood 1926-1939*, London: Croom Helm, 1985, p.p. 5-6.

<sup>14</sup> The Shi'i community in 1929 obtained 5 representatives, accounted for 16,5% of seats, in 1934 3, representing 16% of the seats, in 1937, 8 that is 19% and in 1943 10 deputies accounted for 18% of the seats. For details on this distribution of Shi'i representatives, see Jacques Seguin, *Le Liban-Sud: Espace Périphérique, Espace Convoité*, p.p.43-44.



benefiting from the re-established tobacco regime, did not pose any threat to the Mandate during most of the inter-war period. On the other hand, the French authorities deliberately promoted the new Shi'i political elites, aligning them to the new state structure. In this way, they ensured their unrestrained control, as a fragmented communal leadership would be devoid of any substantial power to resist the French rule.

During the period between 1925 and 1927, when the Druze revolt against the French erupted, the Shi'ites did not participate. In a period of rising turbulence due to the Druze rebellion, in an effort to prevent a common Muslim front against their rule, the French appeased the Shi'ites. Hence, they made an important concession to the community; through the constitution of 1926<sup>15</sup> and on the basis of the French obligation to respect 'local autonomy', the Shi'i community was for the first time treated as a community officially autonomous vis-à-vis the Sunnites. The Ja'farite School of law became formally established and the Shi'i religious courts became the main judicial agents dealing with cases of Shi'i personal status. In this way, the Shi'i community became legal and equal to the other communities within Lebanon.

Nonetheless, despite the apparent changes that the constitution brought for the Shi'i community, overall it meant to institutionalise the sectarian and clientelist foundations of both the Lebanese State and society. According to the constitution, Lebanon was to become a 'Republic', while its institutions were built on the premises of the French Third Republic. The new system was in fact a hybrid of western-type institutions<sup>16</sup> that functioned along the lines of the prevalent culture of patronage, clientelism and clannish politics. In real terms, the constitution favoured the dominant classes, amongst which were the Shi'i land owning feudal classes. The members of these classes as has been argued, *"despite religious, sectarian, regional and national differences,...cooperated with each other because they shared a similar interest-exploitation of the institutions of the new state to strengthen their positions and increase their wealth. They used sectarianism more as a tool*

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<sup>15</sup> January 27th, 1926, decree no. 3503.

<sup>16</sup> The 1926 constitution in terms of the legislative power, provisioned for the creation of two Houses; a Chamber of Deputies, consisted of thirty deputies, elected for a four-year term; and a Senate, consisted of sixteen members, seven appointed by the President and nine elected for a period of six years. Both Houses were granted considerable powers; these included the election of the President, voting confidence in the government, and approval of the annual budget. Added to that, the executive power was granted to both the President and the government. The first revision of the constitution, in October 1927, abolished the Senate and granted excessive executive powers to the President at the expense of the government. The second revision of April 1929, extended the Presidential mandate from three to six-year term.

to extract privileges for themselves, their relatives and their clients than protect the interests of their communities.”<sup>17</sup> During the successive electoral periods, in both the Shi’i areas of the Bekaa and the south, convenient alliances were formed between the members of the dominant feudal families. In this way, these families ensured the maintenance of power between them.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the High Commission’s involvement in playing these dominant families off against each other ensured the fragmented nature of the local leadership.

At another level, the Sunni pro-Syrian propaganda did not appeal any more to the Shi’i community. Even though there was the cultural dimension of Arab identity linked to a common Arab culture, language and history, in political terms, Arabism was represented by a small circle of Sunni notables. The Shi’i leadership, on the other hand, was well incorporated into the political institutions of the Mandate.<sup>19</sup> However, from the mid-thirties onward, some members of the Shi’i leadership, aspiring to a more prominent role in a future distribution of power within an independent state, rose to oppose the French rule. At this stage, the Shi’i political leadership acknowledged the fact that there was no way of playing a prominent political role in an independent Arab Kingdom based in Damascus with an overwhelming Sunni majority.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, the Shi’i leadership acquired a political interest in the establishment of an independent Lebanese State that would guarantee the proportional representation of the different religious communities.

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<sup>17</sup> Meir Zamir, *Lebanon’s Quest: The Road to Statehood 1926-1939*, p.31.

<sup>18</sup> An indicative example of these arrangements is the elections of 1929; in the south where six deputies had to be elected, an agreement was reached between the established feudal families, the As’ads and the Zeins. Hence, Yusuf al-Zein headed a list that included a member of the As’ad family, as well as Najib Usayran, a member of another leading Shi’i family from Tyre. During the same elections, three prominent clans of the Bekaa reached the same sort of agreement the Haidars, the Hamadehs and the Huseinis. Both these lists emerged victorious out of the forthcoming elections.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Waddah Charara, journalist in the Lebanese daily an-Nahar, 5/4/2000.

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Olmert, “The Shi’is and the Lebanese State”, in Martin Kramer (ed.), *Shi’ism, Resistance, and Revolution*, U.S.: Westview Press, 1987, p.192.

In addition, in both the Shi'i regions of the Bekaa and the South the social conditions improved only a little throughout the French Mandate. During the thirties, very few resources were invested in areas such as the south, the Bekaa, Tripoli and the north of Lebanon, while the agricultural sector was seriously neglected.<sup>21</sup> It was in 1930 that the government of Emile Eddé announced a large investment programme in the area around Beirut. This provoked the strong criticisms of other regions, the south and the Bekaa being amongst these. The Shi'ites of the south in particular, organised a protest against the government's failure to allocate resources to all the areas.<sup>22</sup>

This active opposition of the Shi'i population of the south in particular, against the state neglect reached its peak in 1934. It was before the forthcoming elections of 1934 that the head of social services in south Lebanon, Commandant Peckoff, warned the High Commissioner, de Martel, of the potential dangers of the Shi'i disaffection in the south. In view of the elections of 1934, the general Shi'i discontent in the south was once more attached to the politics of patronage and the game of political alliances of the established families of the area. The High Commission's backing of the Usayrans and the Fadels in the elections brought the outrage of the other prominent families, the Zeins and the As'ads. In his attempt to undermine the power-base of his rival clans, Yusuf al-Zein, in turn, issued claims for Shi'i equality. These claims brought the successive harsher stand of both his competitors, the Shi'i deputies Najib Usayran and Fadel al-Fadel who, in their effort to maintain their popular following, came out to speak in defence of the community rights.

At that stage, the Shi'i clerics and students began to openly criticise both the High Commission and the Lebanese government for neglecting the south. During this period, the Shi'ites held several meetings and protests. In these protests, the Shi'ites demanded a greater share in the administration, and the appointment of a Shi'i *Imam* to a position similar to the Sunni *Mufti* of the Republic. They also called for the construction of more public schools in the south, projects of road construction and irrigation, as well as protection of the tobacco industry in the south.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> For more details on the decline of agriculture throughout the mandate, see Meir Zamir, *Lebanon's Quest: The Road to Statehood 1926-1939*, p. 61.

<sup>22</sup> For more details on the Shi'i protest, see, Meir Zamir, *Lebanon's Quest: The Road to Statehood 1926-1939*, p.p. 75-76.

<sup>23</sup> See, Meir Zamir, *Lebanon's Quest: The Road to Statehood 1926-1939*, p.p. 156-157.

It was in 1935, in the midst of the Franco-Lebanese negotiations for a treaty that would determine the future of Lebanon, that the French authorities struggled to win the Shi'i support, under the pressure posed by the ongoing Franco-Syrian negotiations and the resurrection of the Syrian nationalist movement. As the French argued, the Shi'ites would be better off in Lebanon rather than in a Sunni Syrian state. In exchange for the Shi'i support, they took up the responsibility of pressuring the government to increase the proportion of Shi'i participation in administrative posts, as well as the allocation of additional funds for the development of the south. Consequently, French authorities demonstrated themselves to be the main protectors of the Shi'i rights, urging the Shi'i political leadership to distance itself from the Syrian unionist campaign and to declare its loyalty to the State of Lebanon. The end result of such a strategy was a rally organised in Nabatiyya, in November 1935, when petitions were sent to the High Commission. In these petitions, the Shi'i community declared its allegiance to the Lebanese State and its commitment to the forthcoming treaty.<sup>24</sup>

Nevertheless the Shi'i dissatisfaction went on, especially in the aftermath of the abrupt tax reforms imposed by the French, in 1936, that ran to the detriment of the Shi'i masses. In addition, the disaffection of the dominant classes increased when the State Tobacco Regie introduced a harsh tax policy at the expense of some *za'ims* and the new classes emerged out of the Ottoman land reforms. In their turn, both these classes instigated the open reaction of dissatisfied tobacco farmers against the French. Finally, what became evident at this stage was that in their attempt to integrate the local economies of Lebanon into market production, the French failed to alleviate the hardship of the impoverished peasants. In effect, these policies stirred the reaction of the peasant classes, directly involved in the major political crises of the period.

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<sup>24</sup> See, Meir Zamir, *Lebanon's Quest: The Road to Statehood 1926-1939*, p. 205.

### 3.2.2 Representation of Shi'i Collective Identity

Throughout the French Mandate in Lebanon, the Shi'ites became established as a religious community and were granted relevant autonomy to perform their religious practices. This was a major change, especially in a period when the memories of hardship and oppression were very fresh. Even during the final stages of the Ottoman Empire, the Shi'ites had suffered at the hands of the Ottoman authorities, which had put strict restrictions on the performance of the major Shi'i event of *Ashura*. As late as 1918, guards were placed by the Ottoman authorities in the entrances of the mosques, ordered to disperse the gatherers, while others checked the villages so as to ensure that no private gatherings were to take place at homes.<sup>25</sup> Since the 1920s, due to their new communal status within the state and social structure of the Mandate, the Shi'ites could freely perform most of their rituals. Hence an uncontested dual leadership, religious and political, converged and gave legitimation to one another. In fact the French authorities used both the Shi'i religious and political leadership as mediators between the colonial authority and the Shi'i mass population.

In addition, *al-Irfan* reopened, illustrating the prevalent climate of the period. The main characteristic of *al-Irfan*'s publications in the early twenties is a certain concentration of coverage of the Middle East. Through the pro-Hashimite political orientation of the magazine a new discourse was formulated, intending to strengthen the Arab Islamic bonds, as a defensive mechanism against the disruptive French encroachment. *Al-Irfan* established a context in which the predominant issues dealt with the political affairs of Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Egypt, at the expense of other regions. A strong attachment and a growing solidarity with Northern Palestine, especially the twin cities of Haifa and Safad, became evident as a result of both geo-political and economic linkages among these areas. When issues on the East-West divide were raised, *al-Irfan*'s bond with the neighbouring Middle Eastern context provided some sort of answers. The prevalent position of *al-Irfan*, was that "*the East/West theme, beginning as a deep moral crisis precipitated in the East by the West, became in a later period a historical phenomenon affecting civilizations*

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<sup>25</sup> See Maatouk Frédérik, *La Representation de la Mort de l'Imam Hussein á Nabatieh (Liban-Sud)*.



rather than countries and was accepted as part of a larger historical pattern of the ebb and flow of civilization itself.”<sup>26</sup>

As the journal bridged the Shi'ites of Jabal Amil with their co-religionists in Persia and Iraq, a number of articles provided historical information on both these countries. Moreover, in its historical discourse, *al-Irfan* treated Muslim sectarianism as a problem, emanating from ignorance rather than irreconcilable differences; as has been argued, “as it grew older, the magazine developed a missionary momentum one of whose chief features was an attitude and a politics of active compromise. The polemics against Sunnite figures like Rashid Rida, Muhammad Kurd 'Ali and Is'af al-Nashashibi were seen as rebuttals to insults engendered by ignorance. These polemics called for Muslim unity as an ideal of religious as well as political value, in the name of a deeper historical understanding of Muslim texts.”<sup>27</sup>

From the mid to the late thirties, *al-Irfan* became the forum of a powerful literary and religious movement that emerged in Jabal Amil to vigorously critique the major issues at stake; the religious establishment, the feudal landlords and the French Mandate. This movement known as the literary fraternity (*Usbat al-Adab al-Amili*), was first established in Najaf, in the late twenties or early thirties, by a group of young *Shaykhs*, expressing their strong reaction against the *ulama* establishment. In 1937, a scholar educated in Najaf, al-Shaykh Ali al-Zayn, published a fraternity manifesto in *al-Irfan*, declaring the main principles of his group. Through this manifesto, he described the prevalent atmosphere as “feudal”, “reactionary” and “anti-democratic.”<sup>28</sup> Gradually, a whole theory of literature and poetry was adjusted to the daily reality and the political struggle against the Mandate, the feudal overlords and the religious establishment. Through poetry and literature, the fraternity established a distinct approach, both sceptical and liberal, to the underlying issues of foreign domination and sectarianism. The vigorous denunciation of the religious establishment revealed a reformed vision of religion itself. As has been argued, “several members of this fraternity, claiming that they remained pious Muslims, ‘defrocked’ themselves one after the other, causing an outcry in the ‘ulama’ establishment. The pride and joy of Shi’ite

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<sup>26</sup> T. Khalidi, “Shaykh Ahmad ‘Arif Al-Zayn and Al-Irfan”, in Marwan R. Buheiry (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890-1939*, p. 113.

<sup>27</sup> Tarif Khalidi, “Shaykh Ahmad ‘Arif Al-Zayn and Al-Irfan”, in Marwan R. Buheiry (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890-1939*, p. 115.

<sup>28</sup> Tarif Khalidi, “Shaykh Ahmad ‘Arif Al-Zayn and Al-Irfan”, in Marwan R. Buheiry (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890-1939*, p. 117.

*theology and law, the principle of ijtihad itself, was ridiculed for having become an empty, chaotic and antiquated slogan. Genuine Islam must be continuously open to knowledge and to other Islamic sects.*"<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, at a later stage, *al-Irfan* detached itself from the turbulent events of the mid-thirties and did not treat them with the same freedom. As a religious magazine with its editor being a member of the religious class of *ulama*, it soon became the vehicle of the established religious passivity and quiescence towards temporal affairs.<sup>30</sup> *Al-Irfan* could deal with wider theoretical political issues, providing a particular moral attitude to the established order of things, but never profoundly indulged in any analysis of daily politics. Thus, it constructed a very timid and cautious political forum, which eventually mirrored the prevalent attitude of the *ulama*. This cautious attitude of the *ulama* became evident by the mid-thirties, when these were the last group to get involved in the major political events of the period. When it eventually got involved, the class of *ulama* used these events so as to manifest their reaction against the traditional elite, held responsible for the imposition of the Mandate in Lebanon.

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<sup>29</sup> Tarif Khalidi, "Shaykh Ahmad 'Arif Al-Zayn and Al-Irfan", in Marwan R. Buheiry (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890-1939*, p. 117.

<sup>30</sup> As it is argued, "the 'ulama in Jabal Amil were descendants of a 'collective unconscious' which taught them to keep at a safe distance from empires and to treat them with care." Tarif Khalidi, "Shaykh Ahmad 'Arif Al-Zayn and Al-Irfan", in Marwan R. Buheiry (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890-1939*, p.123.

### *3.3 State building and a Different Version of 'National Citizenship': The Case of the Lebanese Shi'ites*

#### *3.3.1 State and Distribution of Socio-economic Resources: Shi'i Socio-economic Marginality within the Independent State of Lebanon*

In the aftermath of independence, by the end of the 1940s, the Shi'i population was still concentrated in the two main areas; the Jabal Amil in the south, and the Ba'albek-Hirmil in the north-eastern part of Lebanon. These two areas represented approximately 85%<sup>30</sup> of the total Shi'i population of Lebanon. During this period, the Shi'i population was regionally fairly concentrated, homogeneous and predominantly rural; in 1948, the urban Shi'ites did not represent more than 10%<sup>31</sup> of the whole community. The agrarian structures of both the south and Ba'albek-Hirmil present particular characteristics; in the Hirmil, the prevalent system was based on grand collective tributary properties; in Ba'albek grand private properties co-existed with collective properties, at times covering the area of one village. In such a system, while dismemberment and individualisation had functioned since 1930s, the small peasant freeholders were rather marginal. By contrast, in the south, notable families possessed very large properties that covered more than one village and co-existed, though unequally, with small peasant properties.<sup>32</sup>

The first Arab-Israeli war disrupted the traditional commercial ties between the Shi'i agrarian population of the south and the area of Northern Palestine, the Palestinian city of Haifa in particular. The exchange of agricultural products with Palestine was the main source of income for the population of the south, on the one hand. On the other, the adjustment of their production to the demands of the Palestinian market was sufficient enough so that there

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<sup>30</sup> Salim Nasr, "Mobilisation Communautaire et Symbolique Religieuse: L' Imam Sadr et les Chi'ites du Liban (1970-1975)." In Olivier Carré et Paul Dumont (eds.), *Radicalismes Islamiques*, Tome I, p. 120.

<sup>31</sup> Salim Nasr, "Mobilisation Communautaire et Symbolique Religieuse: L' Imam Sadr et les Chi'ites du Liban (1970-1975)", in Olivier Carré et Paul Dumont (eds.), *Radicalismes Islamiques*, Tome I, p. 120.

<sup>32</sup> Salim Nasr, "Mobilisation Communautaire et Symbolique Religieuse: L' Imam Sadr et les Chi'ites du Liban (1970-1975)", in Olivier Carré et Paul Dumont (eds.), *Radicalismes Islamiques*, Tome I, p. 120-121.

was no need for a reorientation of the economic activity.<sup>33</sup> After the Israeli State was declared, in 1948, the closing of the frontier with Palestine disturbed a great proportion of the established economic activity between the south of Lebanon and Northern Palestine. In addition, the rate of unemployment in the south increased, as a large number of people, previously employed as casual agricultural workers in Palestine, became unemployed. Consequently, the closing of the border with Palestine brought a great deal of insecurity; this fact, combined with the dramatic under-equipment of the region, placed the majority of the Shi'i population into a precarious position. At that stage, the average income in the south was estimated to be five times lower than the average income in Beirut; the only social groups who continued to prosper were the landholders and the powerful patrons.<sup>34</sup>

At the beginning of the fifties, the rural populations of the Bekaa and the south were amongst the largest part of the population to pay the heavy price of the serious decline of the agricultural sector. The establishment, by entrepreneurs and Shi'i emigrants, of large agricultural businesses in extended tracts of land, formerly belonging to the notable families, drastically changed the rural scene of these regions. Most of the small landholders were destroyed, under the heavy strain of competition on rather unequal terms. Hence, strong commercial interests prevailed out of the rapid capitalist penetration; eventually, these interests eroded the traditional agricultural economy. In addition, the increasing state negligence and the absence of effective measures to counterbalance the unregulated economic developments allowed for the heavy exploitation of the small peasantry throughout the process of production.<sup>35</sup>

Even though the fifties saw the economic boom of Beirut, as the centre of financial and trade activities,<sup>36</sup> a great deal of the peripheral areas, most of which were predominantly Shi'i, lagged

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<sup>33</sup> For more details on the disruption of economic activity between the south and Palestine see, Waddah Charara, *Transformations d'une Manifestation Religieuse dans un Village du Liban-Sud (Ashura)*, Chapter Four.

<sup>34</sup> On these developments, See Elizabeth Picard, "De la 'Communauté-Classe à la Résistance 'Nationale: Pour une Analyse du Role des Chi'ites dans le Système Politique Libanais (1970-1975)", in *Revue Française de Science Politique*, December 1985, p.1003.

<sup>35</sup> Halawi attributes the destructive implications of capitalism for the Shi'i peasantry to the following factors: a) specialisation in a few new crops to the detriment of the traditional products, b) a changed agricultural policy mostly dependent on private interests, c) the poor payment and working conditions of the agricultural labourers, exacerbating their poor living conditions, d) the weakening of agricultural credit by the public sector and its subjugation to the banks and individual moneylenders, e) state policies of irrigation and land reclamation, based on corruption and inefficiency, f) the continuing monopoly of the tobacco industry. On these developments see, Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community*, p.p. 52-60.

<sup>36</sup> Elizabeth Picard attributes the rapid economic development of Beirut to a well-planned strategy that

behind in terms of basic amenities, such as adequate health and schooling system, running water and electricity.<sup>37</sup> Increasing illiteracy amongst the Shi'i population,<sup>38</sup> coupled with the restraints imposed by the confessional quotas in the civil service,<sup>39</sup> limited even more the chances for social mobility. This was also indicative of the social insularity of the community, as its majority was occupied in the lower paid sectors, such as farming, peddling or labour.<sup>40</sup>

The Shi'i socio-economic underdevelopment and marginality could highlight what Claude Dubar calls a double articulation, a double overlapping between communal and class identities on the one hand, and between confessional identities and the political institutions of the state, on the other.<sup>41</sup> Is it the integration of individuals into their community and, in turn the incorporation of their respective community into the 'nation' that did not allow for the emergence of a class identity amongst the Lebanese population? Or, is it then that the process of rapid modernisation eventually replaced the prevalent confessional structures with a new system of social stratification?<sup>42</sup>

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combined the interest of French entrepreneurs and Lebanese merchants. This economic boom was further encouraged by the favourable regional developments; the closing of the port of Haifa to Arab markets, in 1948, the establishment in Syria of authoritarian nationalist regimes and the dramatic increase in oil revenues of the Arab peninsula. See, Elizabeth Picard, *The Lebanese Shi'a and Political Violence*.

<sup>37</sup> The situation in the Shi'i villages, in the fifties, is described as follows: "the south has the fewest paved roads per person or per acre. Running water is still missing in all villages and towns although water pipes were extended to many areas in the early sixties. Electricity networks were erected at about the same time, but they are inoperative most of the time. Sewage facilities are available only in large towns and cities. Outside the larger centers telephone service is completely absent except for a single manual cabin which is usually out of order. Doctors visit the villages once a week and sometimes only once a month. Clinics are maintained only in large villages and do not function regularly. Hospitals and pharmacies are found only in the larger population centers. Elementary school is usually run in an old unhealthy house provided by the village. Intermediate schools were introduced to the large towns in the mid-sixties." Hasan Sharif, "South Lebanon: Its History and Geopolitics", in Elaine Hagopian and Samih Farsoun (eds.), *South Lebanon*, Belmont, Massachusetts: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1981, p.11.

<sup>38</sup> As has been pointed out, "in 1961 only one-quarter of university students were Muslim, and less than ten per cent Shi'i." Theodor Hanf, *Co-existence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, London: Centre for Lebanese Studies & I.B. Tauris, 1993, p. 94.

<sup>39</sup> According to the numbers presented by Theodor Hanf, Shi'i communal representation in the top civil service posts was 3, 4 and 6 percent, in 1946, 1955 and 1958 respectively compared with 39, 40 and 38 percent for the Maronite community during the same period and 29, 27 and 26 percent for the Sunnites. Theodor Hanf, *Co-existence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, p. 93.

<sup>40</sup> Joseph Chamie, "The Lebanese Civil War: An Investigation into the Causes", *World Affairs* 139, Winter 1976/1977, p. 179.

<sup>41</sup> Claude Dubar, "Structure Confessionnelle et Classes Sociales au Liban", in *Revue Francaise de Sociologie*, July-September 1974, p.p. 327-328.

<sup>42</sup> On both the Culturalist and the Functionalist approaches of the Lebanese modernisation, see, Claude Dubar, "Structure Confessionnelle et Classes Sociales au Liban", p.p. 308-313.



The regional division of production in Lebanon and the capitalist encroachment into previously rural areas influenced the composition of social classes. These effects were particularly felt amongst the rural population, amongst which the Shi'ites represented the largest part. Certainly, this argument is not exclusively addressed to the Shi'i community, but to the broader segment of the rural population in Lebanon, irrespectively of their sects. However, the distinction between the Shi'i community and the rest of the Lebanese communities could be traced in the blocked intra-communal mobility the Shi'i community suffered. During the first stages of state building, the distribution of wealth across the different regions in Lebanon indicates the overlapping between communal and class identity. Hence, the most poor, marginal and less urbanised regions were predominantly the Shi'i regions of south Lebanon, western Bekaa and Akkar; the richest areas could be found in the prominently Christian-Maronite and Greek Orthodox-quarters of Beirut, while a Sunni bourgeoisie had a long-established advantageous position.<sup>43</sup> Added to that is the fact that the Christian population, the Maronites in particular, formed the majority of the upper and middle classes while the Muslim population, most notably the Shi'ites, constituted the majority of the mass popular classes.<sup>44</sup> Looking into the intra-communal social classification, the Maronite community similarly represented an overwhelming agrarian population; nevertheless, an intervening stratum of Maronite middle class indicated an open upward social mobility within the Maronite community. By contrast, in the Shi'i case a limited middle class bridged a very small minority of upper class with a very large majority of lower class, indicating a large gap between the upper and the lower social classes.<sup>45</sup> The wide social cleavage within the Shi'i community was combined with the Shi'i under-representation in civil service posts. In addition, the fact that the

<sup>43</sup> As Claude Dubar points out, "Les differences régionales attestent d'ailleurs, au Liban, la persistance des inégalités confessionnelles: les régions les plus pauvres, les plus marginales et les moins urbanisées sont aussi les régions à majorité musulmanes et notamment chiite (Liban sud, Bekaa ouest, Akkar...); à l'inverse, les quartiers les plus riches de Beiruth sont des quartier majoritairement chrétiens (Maronites, Grecs orthodoxes) même si une vieille bourgeoisie sunnite y occupe une place jugée parfois avantageuse." Claude Dubar, "Structure Confessionnelle et Classes Sociales au Liban", p. 317.

<sup>44</sup> Claude Dubar estimates the Maronite social categories of upper and middle class as 27 percent out of 36 percent of the total Maronite population. Out of a total 35 percent of Shi'i population only 13 percent was estimated to belong to the upper-middle classes, while the rest belonged to the labour and proletariat classes. Claude Dubar, "Structure Confessionnelle et Classes Sociales au Liban", p. 318.

<sup>45</sup> Even though Claude Dubar, in his analysis on the structure of social classes, did not pay enough attention to the factor of intra-communal social stratification, the numbers he presents give a rough picture of the intra-confessional social structures. In effect within the Maronite community an intervening middle class of 22 percent bridges the upper and lower classes, while in the case of the Sunnite community this is estimated at 14 percent. In the case of the Shi'ites, the middle class, which represents 11 percent, links a very small minority of upper class, estimated at only 2 percent, to a large majority of lower class, estimated at 21 percent. See, Claude Dubar, "Structure Confessionnelle et Classes Sociales au Liban", p. 318.

Shi'i community lagged far behind all the other communities in Lebanon in terms of education did not leave a lot of space for social change and mobility within the community itself.

At another level though, the underdeveloped Shi'i socio-economic status could very well indicate a particular way of state building. On the one hand, the Lebanese political institutions were constructed so as to support the state and its political 'myths'; on the other, after a while, these institutions proved impotent to deal with social change. The encroachment of a 'peripheral', and, to a large extent, externally driven type of capitalism brought the disintegration of the previous social structure and the identities this represented. Through its social and political institutions, the Lebanese State allowed for fundamental changes, nevertheless, it did not counterbalance the existing growth with the adoption of social reforms. Hence, the Lebanese State did not penetrate society to forge a homogenised and coherent social context. Even though the state extracted a great deal of resources so as to secure its survival, it failed to re-circulate them equally amongst the relevant strata of its population, especially the most impoverished. In this way, it marginalised a large segment of the population and this was a sign of its poor capability to integrate, both morally and materially, all the various segments of the population as citizens. Thus, one communal group enjoyed the social rewards but not another. This fact indicates a main component ascribed to the Levantine State; in that it *"excludes important parts of the historical experience of its society, not by transforming them into a more homogenous and 'transparent' political space but by coercively separating and isolating them; by abridging society into the state. The state is thus 'antisociety': it isolates the society, then it sits in the social emptiness and dominates."*<sup>46</sup>

### ***3.3.2 State and Political Representation: Shi'i Political Participation in the Lebanese System***

The communal political balance that the National Pact established was, to a large extent, in continuity with the Mandate political balance of power. The establishment of Beirut as the socio-economic and political centre, throughout the Mandate, brought a Sunni and Maronite urban elite to prominence. These elites prevailed in Beirut's political scene and were the ones to decide over the main political developments of the period. Rural in origin, the Shi'i political leadership was established in the remote villages of the Bekaa and the south, being isolated in

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<sup>46</sup> Nazih N. Ayubi, *Over-stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*, p. 109.

terms of participation in the politics of the capital, possessing a limited following. When the Maronite and Sunni elites built their bonds with the West and the ideology of Arab nationalism respectively, the Shi'i leaders were consumed in a tribal struggle for power, with either competing factions of their own families, or with rival families of notables. Even if some Shi'i leaders espoused the ideology of Arab nationalism, they did so on the basis of personal rather than communal interest. The incorporation of the Shi'i elites into the institutions of the Mandate did not bring the subsequent elevation of their status in the political scene of Beirut; latecomers to Beirut politics, they did not aspire to compete with the already established Maronite and Sunni political position. During that period, the Shi'i population was overwhelmingly rural, inhabiting peripheral areas. This fact limited the communal following of the Shi'i leaders within Beirut, as Maronites and Sunnites predominantly inhabited this.

The communal proportional representation according to the 1932 census<sup>47</sup> ascribed the Shi'ites the third largest place, after the Maronites and the Sunnites as first and second largest communities respectively. According to this census, the Shi'i community was entitled to 19.2 percent of the country's parliamentary representation and a representation to the cabinet and service posts, corresponding to its weight amongst the Muslims. Following increasing Shi'i protests, in 1947, the third most important post, the Speakership of the Parliament, was reserved to a member of the Shi'i community.<sup>48</sup>

At a subsequent stage, with the implementation of the Communal Pact, the Shi'i community was under-represented in both the executive level of power and the civil service. First, in the period between 1946 and 1962 an astounding<sup>49</sup> Shi'i under-representation in the upper ranks of the government occurred; in fact, Shi'i representation in government was more or less equal to that of the Druzes, the Greek Orthodox and the Greek Catholics. The same went as far as the representation of the community in administrative posts was concerned, as well as positions in the public service.<sup>50</sup> The traditional reservation of a great number of higher executive posts to

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<sup>47</sup> According to the 1932 census, the Shi'is constituted the 19.6 percent of the population.

<sup>48</sup> After the parliament elected, in 1946, a Greek Orthodox, Habib Abu Shahla to succeed a Shi'ite, Sabri Hamada in the Speakership, Shi'i mass protests erupted everywhere in the country, while the Shi'i deputies threatened to resign. Shahla was eventually forced to resign, in 1947 and Hamada was re-elected in his place. Since then the post of Speakership is always reserved for a Shi'i representative.

<sup>49</sup> In this period, Shi'i representation in the government varies between one and three members, according to numbers presented in Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community*, p. 99.

<sup>50</sup> In 1946, the representation of Shi'ites in the first class civil service posts was one of the thirty-one posts, while in 1962 Shi'i representation was two in seventy posts. See, David R. Smock, and Aundrey C. Smock, *The Politics of Pluralism: A Comparative Study of Lebanon and Ghana*, p.127.

the Sunnites and especially the Christian Maronites exacerbated the already established communal representation at the expense of the Shi'ites. Second, the Shi'i representation was not translated into real political power at the executive level; the post of the Speakership was devoid of any political power to influence and form policy decisions. The role of the Prime Minister, ascribed to the Sunni community, had some chance for influence in decision-making. Overall however, both the posts of the Premiership and that of the Speakership of the Parliament were anyway subjugated to the heavy presidential system; the latter system did not leave enough space for a real communal participation in the higher echelons of the political institutions. Even though in the aftermath of the Lebanese civil war in 1959, more influential political power was granted to the Premiership, the Speakership was left unchanged, indicating the real extent of Shi'i political under-representation.

Consequently, the limited institutional role of the Shi'ites accelerated the alienation of the community from political participation; the community was still confined to the small elite of local families, the *zu'ama*, around which a whole network of services and patronage was constructed.<sup>51</sup> This fact, however, did not imply a situation exclusive to the Shi'i community, as was a common component of the majority of the communities within Lebanon,<sup>52</sup> in their attempt to communicate with the central authority. Keeping the continuity with the past, the state institutionalised these indirect channels of communication with the population. The tribal leaders of the past were elevated to 'parliamentarians', establishing their following through elections. However having to struggle with the harsh living conditions in the post-independence period, the Shi'ites were much more dependent on the local *zu'ama* for the fulfilment of the most basic of their needs.<sup>53</sup> The political marginality of the Shi'i *zu'ama*, and the fact that they addressed an overwhelmingly quiescent population in urgent need, led to the reproduction of the tribal practices and alliances of the past.

<sup>51</sup> For more details on the role of the Shi'i *Zu'ama*, See Fuad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr & the Shia of Lebanon*, p.p. 63-71.

<sup>52</sup> For more details on the Sunni *Zu'ama*, See Michael Johnson, *Class & Client in Beirut: The Sunni Muslim community and the Lebanese State, 1840-1985*, London: Ithaca Press, London & Atlantic Highlands, 1986. On the roles of the Christian *Zu'ama*, see, Peter Gubser, "The *Zu'ama* of Zahlah: The Current Situation in a Lebanese Town", in *Middle East Journal*, vol. 27, no. 2, 1973.

<sup>53</sup> As Arnold Hottinger demonstrates, "The *Zu'ama* from the small communities, Shi'i and Druze, particularly if they were from the remote localities, had little reason not to collaborate with the government. Their position with their followers was secure; it depended much less on their politics than on their landed property and personal influence over their clients. These same deputies and ministers were returned year after year to the different assemblies." See, Arnold Hottinger, "Zu'ama in Historical Perspective", in L. Binder, *Politics in Lebanon*, p. 95.



The relegation of political authority to the intermediate channels of the *zu'ama*, in fact, reproduced the prior overlapping identities of the population. First, religion became strengthened as a common denominator between the leadership and the people. At various instances, this leadership used the religion so as to maintain its authority over 'its' people; because as is argued, "*in order to win and hold the confidence of his client group, the za'im had to be, and still is of the same religious community as the people over whom he rules or for whom he speaks or takes action.... Apparently even in feudal times the fief holder had to be sufficiently close to "his" people and was sufficiently depended on their good will to be obliged to accept their religion as his own.*"<sup>54</sup> Second, the family and tribal identities of the past were reinforced with the establishment and institutionalisation of family associations. The founders of these associations used the family and tribal attachments of the population so as to gain access to the political leadership and the higher state offices. These family associations had an autonomous legal status, being bureaucratically registered and organised around a council. On the other hand, they were sustained through the provision of an extensive network of services to the people, on the premises of family and genealogical linkages.<sup>55</sup>

In effect, the weak distributive role of the state induced a form of political authority that rose to supplement the state authority. In an effort to reach the various communal segments of the population, the state created and institutionalised this form of political leadership. These patrons assumed their overarching authority, on the premises of communal and familial loyalties. Finally, as the state alienated wide segments of its population, it was the local patrons, and the subsequent personal association with them that allowed the communication of the mass population with the central state authority. Hence, a vested interest for sustaining the existing political balance emerged for all the participants.

<sup>54</sup> Arnold Hottinger, "Zu'ama in Historical Perspective", in L.Binder, *Politics in Lebanon*, p. 89.

<sup>55</sup> For more details on the Maronite and Shi'i family associations in Lebanon, see, Fuad Khuri, chapter five: The Manipulation of Equality: The Case of Family Associations, in Fuad Khuri, *Tents and Pyramids*, Beirut: Al-Saqi Books, 1990, p.p.85-105. See also, Evelyn A. Early, *The Amiliyah Society of Beirut: A Case Study of an emerging Urban Za'im*. On the Sunni family association, the Beirut Islamic Society of Benevolent Intentions (Makassed), see Michael Johnson, *Class & Client in Beirut: The Sunni Muslim Community and the Lebanese State, 1840-1985*, p.p.14-15 and 46-53.



### ***3.4 Representation of Shi'i Identity: Legitimation of Communal Authority***

All the main components that in many other societies led to national accommodation, in Lebanon paved the way for the construction of a particularistic and divisive structure. Religion as a component of identification within Lebanon has a political function and constitutes a reference of socialisation for the population. It became politicised through the confessional system, which not only blessed the various sectarian identifications of the population but also brought these to the highest level of state institutions.<sup>56</sup> Hence, religious rituals served as strong reminders of the sectarian fragmentation of the population. With the declaration of the different religious festivals as public holidays the various religious identifications of the population were transferred to the heart of the state. This fact produced an environment of tolerance and mutual respect, on the one hand. On the other, it strengthened the awareness of communal distinctions. It was through the representation and commemoration of their own history, thus their communal images, that the various communities realised more clearly their distinctive differences with the rest of the communities and the respective communal images that these represented.

During the early stages of independent Lebanon, the core Shi'i ritual of *Ashura*, commemorating the death of Husein at the battle of Kerbala, was conducted in public, in the Huseiniyyas, places built in the memory of Husein. The prevailing socio-economic and political structure of the community defined the actual conduct of the ritual. This structure was constituted of a weak and politically quiescent religious class, dependent on the local patrons for the provision of material help; a prominent political elite, the *zu'ama*; and an impoverished population heavily dependent on the local patrons. Within such a context, the ritual itself was reconstructed on the basis of a solid tradition, in which no particular element was in need of change. The interpretation of the traditions and the sacred texts was rather static and passive, keeping pace with the established structure, transferring a particular attitude to the way things are, in that, "*the tradition released the clerics who accepted and transmitted it from*

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<sup>56</sup> The state, instead of establishing a civil law for all the Lebanese, relegated this function to each community. Hence each community dealt with issues of personal status on the basis of communal codes of personal status; also, each member was registered officially as a member of a particular sect and then he was subject to the courts of that sect for issues of personal status. Also, the educational system, far from being unified, was fractured amongst various educational institutions, functioning on a sectarian basis. For more information on the sectarian system in Lebanon, see, David R. Smock, and Aundrey C. Smock, *The Politics of Pluralism: A Comparative Study of Lebanon and Ghana*, chapters 4-5. See, also, Halim Barakat, "Social and Political Integration in Lebanon: A Case of Social Mosaic", *Middle East Journal*, vol. 27, Summer 1973.

responsibility. One could come to *modus vivendi* with the established political order; one could render it obedience without being implicated in its ways. To reform a social order one would have to accept a more committed kind of membership. It gave those who prescribed to it absolution from political and social responsibility. ”<sup>57</sup>

During this period, *Ashura* was based on the recitation of certain rites, in which the presentation of the historical events of Kerbala was rather conservative. The lecture was very static; the way it was conducted was not based on a spontaneously and naturally emphatic diction of the text, while the emotional participation that the role required did not have any rigour.<sup>58</sup> As a certain distance between the recitation and the commentary defined the interpretation of historical events, the subsequent simulation of the main roles actually mirrored the distribution of the socio-political power. The traditional elites of local deputies and landholders were the ones to organise the ceremony, choose the actors and distribute the roles. In effect, the roles of Husein and his companions were reserved for the notable families; the negative roles of usurpers, Yazid and the Umayyads were simulated by the Shi'i mass, constituted by a large number of impoverished peasants, labour workers in the tobacco plantations, as well as the proletariat. Hence, the representation of the rite indicated the prevalent structures of domination, giving the whole community a strong sense of culpability. This sort of culpability was reinforced through the particular socio-political structures of the community itself, the rigid structure, which clearly distinguished the mass from the local leaders, the suppression and the frustrations that the community endured. In fact, *Ashura* was a mirror of these unfavourable circumstances of the community.

The main component of the ceremony, the infliction of self-punishment on the part of the Shi'i mass population, was a way of turning the aggression on to the community itself and perpetuating the self-sacrifice of the Shi'ites so as to excise the eruption of conflicts within the community. Consequently, the participants in the tragedy were directed against the assassins of Husein, the Shi'i mass population, the symbols of political power the rulers, who are clearly denounced in the text. At the same time, through their roles in the ritual, the local notables were protected by a communal legitimation of major historical importance; as the partisans of Ali and Husein, they denounced the oppression inflicted on, and always exterior to, the community. Hence, recuperated by the traditional elites, *Ashura* was turned on the population,

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<sup>57</sup> Fuad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr & the Shia of Lebanon*, p. 81.

<sup>58</sup> Waddah Charara, *Transformations d'une Manifestation Religieuse dans un Village du Liban-Sud (Ashura)*, p.35.

which rendered it a rite of submission, in contrast with the revolutionary tradition of Shi'ism itself.<sup>59</sup>

Concluding, the focus of the ritual on the legitimization of the community, rather than that of the 'nation' itself, clearly distinguished the community from the 'nation'. Instead of representing a sense of membership to the Lebanese state, what mattered was the way the community was linked to its historical past. On the other hand, this linkage was reinforced through the association of the community with its prevalent social and authority structures; thus, a particular perception of communal identity was constructed, intensifying the bonds that the population held with its respective community, rather than the state itself.

### 3.5 Conclusion

This chapter links the prior historical contexts of the Ottoman and Mandate Lebanon to the political context of the independent State of Lebanon. Consequently, within the Ottoman context, local, religious and kinship loyalties were invented by the central Ottoman authority, in its attempt to reach the diverse population of the Empire. Hence, through the *millet* system and the politics of notables a whole network of authority became established so as to reproduce the overlapping loyalties of the subject population. The French Mandate did not destroy this context; rather, throughout the Mandate the French built their authority on the prior Ottoman political context. Even though the French forged new political elites, the role ascribed to these elites remained to a large extent unchanged. In essence, these stood as intermediaries between the Mandate authority and the population, and went on to define the prevalent balance of power on the basis of both inter- and intra- communal struggle for predominance. As the Shi'i case demonstrated, these prevalent sources of authority paved the way for the continuing co-existence of both communal and tribal allegiances.

At a next stage, these multiple identities of the independent Lebanon were transferred to the state level. As throughout its past experience was conditioned to function through the intermediate channels of authority, what came to constitute the independent State of Lebanon did not uproot these; rather, it continued to extract legitimacy through the authority the local political leaders extracted from the population. Moreover, the external component of the late

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<sup>59</sup> On this meaning of Ashura, during this period, see Elizabeth Picard, "De la 'Communauté-Classe' à la Résistance 'National'". Pour une Analyse du Role des Chiites dans le Système Politique Libanais", p.p. 1008-1009.

Ottoman context, passing through the period of the French Mandate rose to articulate the new state structures as well. Thus, the State of Lebanon was formed when the international circumstances changed favourably toward this aim, while both domestic but most importantly external actors defined the very nature of the state. Consequently, external factors continued to define the state, in the sense that the prevalent political elites of the Mandate transferred their prominent position to the political institutions of the Independent State of Lebanon.

Consequently, far from signifying a diversion from the mainstream historical paradigm of state formation and state building, these components signify a different historical experience, bringing useful inferences as far as the established theoretical context of state building is concerned. State building in Lebanon demonstrated a different version, where entities other than the conventional entity of the 'state' can ascribe for themselves the main roles and functions of the state. As the Shi'i case demonstrated, the existence of socio-economically and politically marginal identities indicate the fact that the state in Lebanon detached itself from the ultimate privilege of the established 'state' as a distributor of socio-economic and political rewards to all the relevant segments of the population. On the contrary, the state in Lebanon allowed for an uneven distribution of these rewards. Second, rather than forging state-sponsored institutions out of which it could extract its legitimacy, the state in Lebanon institutionalised, either implicitly or explicitly, diverse family and communal institutions that stood as mediators between itself and the citizens. Thus, it was these indirect channels of authority that distributed the socio-economic and political rewards to the citizens, on the basis of kinship and communal ties. Contrary to the state-sponsored construction of the 'national' myths and symbols, the case of the Shi'i historical representation through the ritual of *Ashura*, indicates a further legitimization of the prevalent local and communal channels of authority, communal and local rather than 'national' identities. At this stage, the main functions of the state in Lebanon were assessed through the case of the Shi'i community. At a next stage, the thesis will contextualise on the way in which the state mobilised the population and hence, led to the legitimization or not, of its overarching authority.

#### ***4. Shi'i Political Mobilisation: Implications on the State's Legitimacy***

In the previous chapter state attributes were explored through the lenses of the ethnic community. This chapter will assess the extent to which changes in the self-awareness of the community influence state legitimacy. In the mainstream historical paradigm of state building, the state gradually wove the mobilisation of both resources and citizens around its institutions, so that the mobilisation of citizens around state authority became closely attached to state legitimacy. As the case of Shi'i political mobilisation will demonstrate, within the context of the state in Lebanon, it is the ethnic community rather than the state itself that ascribes for itself what is perceived as state prerogative. The political mobilisation of ethnic communities around communal and class institutions, communal and class myths and symbols demonstrate the fact that in different political contexts, entities other than the state itself are similarly capable of inducing mobilisation and thus legitimacy. These authorities induced the various attachments of the Shi'i population, in similar ways as the mainstream states forged the respective 'civic' myths that legitimised the overarching state authority.

##### ***4.1 The Shi'i Community in the throes of Change***

From the mid-fifties, a period of major external and internal upheavals upset the established Lebanese political system. The profound changes of the post-independence period culminated in the serious crisis of 1958. This crisis demonstrated the fragile structure of the Lebanese State, the blurred internal and the external sources of state authority. The dubious foreign policy of the state brought about an inter-communal dissension regarding the state's Arab and Western orientation. While this was indicative of the precarious balance established through the National Pact, when open fighting erupted, the very centre of state legitimacy was placed into serious doubt.

In terms of foreign policy, a major crisis appeared during the presidency of Camille Chamoun, from 1952 onward. The long period, during which the state could not clearly decide whether to accept or reject the Baghdad Pact, provoked serious internal reactions. Eventually Lebanon did not submit membership to the pact. However, it became clear that the final decision was not taken wholeheartedly but under Egyptian pressures. In addition, this decision



disrupted the relationship between the Christian and Muslim segments of the population. When Chamoun explicitly embraced the Eisenhower doctrine, in 1957, he openly risked a military confrontation with Nassirite Egypt, in the aftermath of the Suez crisis, when the appeal of the Egyptian President had reached its peak. Chamoun's pro-western orientation provoked the serious reaction of the Muslim segments of the population. Subsequently, the forthcoming parliamentary elections of 1957 were diminished to a personal opposition to Chamoun and his policies. The already tense atmosphere became exacerbated after rumours were spread that Chamoun intended to amend the Constitution so as to allow his re-election. The fighting erupted in early 1958 with the declaration of the United Arab Republic, bringing the apprehension of Chamoun and many Christians, and the enthusiasm of the opposition. At that point, an open rebellion broke out and the country became split between the Christian east Beirut, remaining loyal to the government, and the west Beirut, the southern parts of the mountains and most of the peripheral areas, under the control of the opposition. As the civil war did not develop into a communal confrontation, the failure of either side to gain a military upper hand brought the opponents to a tacit agreement with the help of American mediation.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the first cracks of the system began to show; this, in its turn, changed the nature of Lebanese politics from then on.

There was not much evidence to suggest that the Shi'i community was forced to comply with one or other of the prevalent attitudes throughout the civil war. An internal polarisation occurred at the level of communal leadership, more or less common within most of the communities of this period. When most of the Christian and Muslim communal leaders clearly identified with either the West or the Arab world, the Shi'i communal leaders were not particularly eager to identify with either group. When they identified, they did so, as a reaction against the Chamoun governing coalition. Entrenched by intra-communal rivalries, the Shi'i leadership was split into the Shi'i *zu'ama*, namely the As'ads and Hamadas, unfavourable to the Chamoun coalition. These elites reacted against the government promotion of their pro-Chamoun communal rivals, mainly the Khalils and Usseirans. Consequently, during this period it was the existing intra-communal balance of power that determined the identification of these elites with the views of the one or the other of the prevalent factions. Whenever it found it

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the political developments that led to the Lebanese crisis of 1958, see, Leila M. T. Meo, *Lebanon Improbable Nation: A Study in Political Development*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965, p.p. 86-218. See also, Theodor Hanf, *Co-existence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, p.p. 113-119.

convenient, the Shi'i leadership adopted the Arabist ideology, though without espousing any socialist dimension this may have included.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, by the late fifties, there were a lot of other significant changes within the context of the Shi'i mass population. The industrialisation of agriculture and the concentration of the means of production in the hands of powerful commercial cartels destroyed the established tenant-farmer system. This development forced the large majority of the Shi'i rural population off the land, increasing the rates of unemployment among this population. Having to face the harsh living conditions in their remote peripheral regions, the Shi'i rural populations migrated to the urban centres, most notably Beirut; there, a suburban proletariat, recently uprooted from the countryside, was settled in shantytowns around the so-called 'misery belt'. Nevertheless, the traditional links of the population with their native rural areas were maintained, as during the period of elections an overwhelming number of Shi'ites went back to their villages to vote for their local patrons. However, these traditional links could do very little to alleviate the plight of the newly urbanised Shi'i masses. While all the other communities had already established alternative networks of patronage in the main urban centres, these networks were fairly weak or non-existent in the case of the Shi'i community. Latecomers to the already established communal networks of the urban centres, the overwhelmingly rural Shi'i population, had to sustain implicit limitations and exclusion.<sup>3</sup>

Even though the Shi'i community was not collectively involved in the crisis of 1958, it was deeply affected by the social and political developments that followed the crisis. With the reinforcement of the administrative, military and socio-economic apparatus of the state, during the Presidency of Fuad Shehab, from 1959 to 1964, the peripheral Shi'i regions were integrated into the central administration. Moreover, the system of confessional representation in the civil service was more strictly respected. A process of change in the infrastructure was launched, with the insertion of electricity networks and the reconstruction of roads to the remotest villages of the south and the Bekaa. Through these changes these peripheral regions gained easier access to the networks of consumption and circulation of products. Also, the insularity of

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<sup>2</sup> Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community*, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> As it is argued, "the fact that by and large the Shi'ite community of the south was one of the last to be incorporated into the modern social and economic structures meant that they entered a system that was already well developed. It had its own groups, élites, and boundaries and no longer permitted easy social mobility. On the contrary. There were new exclusions and new limits that operated behind the façade of apparent free access. Sectors of the rural population were released from the constraints of one system into the structures of another in which, in very different ways, they were also disprivileged and marginal." Michael Gilseman, *Recognising Islam: An Anthropologist's Introduction*, London: Croom Helm, 1982, p. 67.

the system of education broke down, with the development of the Lebanese University, while national and free education became accessible to young Shi'ites of modest financial means.

At another level, these changes influenced the nature of the social classes; an enhanced new middle class of educated Shi'ites was occupied in the high ranks of administration and commerce. This new class filled the preceding huge gap between the *zu'ama* and the peasantry. A bourgeoisie of returning migrants, prospered in the oil-producing Arab countries and eager to convert their wealth into a powerful political role, got involved in a wide array of financial domains, such as banking, industry and grand commercial enterprises. Added to that, was an extended stratum of salaried urban workers and an industrial proletariat, as well as a new class of Shi'i intelligentsia "*intent on challenging the poverty of their community.*"<sup>4</sup>

In effect, the rapid changes created a potential for the mobilisation of the Shi'i community. First, the crisis of 1958, for the first time revealed a dysfunctional state system. The eruption of open military confrontation between the opposing factions indicated the state's weakness to cope with both the rapid internal and external pressures. In the aftermath of the 1958 crisis, the previous political arrangements of the National Pact were seriously questioned and delegitimised. In addition, the socio-economic change failed to improve Shi'i underprivileged status. In fact, the state did not effectively anticipate the widespread effects of these changes on the most disprivileged segments of its population, including the Shi'ites. Coupled with the significant developments within the intra-communal social structures, this fact, created an increasing potential for Shi'i political mobilisation at a next stage.

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<sup>4</sup> Rosemary Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, London: Zed, 1994, p. 165

## ***4.2. Shi'i Political Mobilisation***

### ***4.2.1 Ideology as a Potential Instigator of Shi'i Mobilisation***

The profound social changes, at the end of the fifties, ideologically dislocated the Shi'i community. The changing density of communications and the increasing educational progress offered the urbanised community new channels of expression and influenced the relationship of the Shi'i community with the state. In the preceding years, the Shi'ites of the rural areas had regarded the state as an abstract notion and communicated with it indirectly, through the mediation of their local patrons. The Maronite rural populations, who migrated in similar large numbers to Beirut found ways of expressing their identification with the long established ideological and highly organised parties with a broad Maronite communal base, the Kata'eb party and the National Block. These parties, in their turn, gained much support out of these migrants. Most of the Shi'i migrants, however, previously rural and highly alienated from the socio-economic and political life of Beirut, when they migrated there, had no established communal bases.

Lacking the mediation of their local patrons, in their struggle to reach the state, the Shi'i migrants of Beirut attached themselves to a stream of Marxist or Arab nationalist parties. As an increasing number of young Shi'ites, students and unemployed, were organised within secular political parties, the Shi'i community developed a powerful class-consciousness that transcended the communal and tribal allegiances of the past. The alternative ideological framework of these parties motivated the mass Shi'i proletariat of Beirut to act against the state's failure to provide for its most basic needs.

Through their contact with other more prosperous segments of the population, the impoverished Shi'i masses of Beirut realised their unfavourable situation and their lack of social mobility. They responded to this situation, not by assimilating themselves to the prevailing social and political system, but on the contrary, by rejecting the status quo. Just as the first period of independence had passed with not much change in the status quo, the Chamoun period was equally discouraging. At that point, Nassir rose to embrace the role of the charismatic leader and hero and to elaborate on the anti-imperialist, revolutionary and anti-colonial ideology. Mobilised by the Nassirist rhetoric of social justice, development, anti-Zionism and pan-Arabism, revolutionary and protest movements rose in Lebanon to articulate

a discontent towards, and rejection of, the established political system. As Nassirism remained, for most of the fifties and sixties, a mass movement, without a clear political program of action, the leftist parties that voiced it in effect exploited its organisational limitations and weaknesses. In their struggle for political predominance, these parties capitalised selectively on one or other of its components.<sup>5</sup>

The main radical parties of the left adapted their objectives and ideology to the general revolutionary atmosphere of the period. In their effort to break with the insularity of the past, the Shi'ites identified with radical parties like the Communists, the Ba'ath, the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party and the Arab Nationalist Party. As an increasing number of young Shi'ites found their way to Beirut, they formed an overwhelming majority of the suburban proletariat of Beirut's suburbs, recently uprooted from the countryside, and experiencing a growing feeling of exclusion.<sup>6</sup> Marxist discourse was based on the classical premise of a world divided between the bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the proletarians on the other. There was an explicit denial of confessionalism as responsible for the malfunctions of the system. For them, Lebanese capitalism was the source of evil, as it was entrenching itself in the cities and invading the countryside. At first, Shi'i membership of the party was confined to a small circle of intellectuals. The merging of the Communist Camp with the Nassirist Camp, in the period between 1964 and 1965, extended both its popular base and its grassroots organisation. By voicing a policy of popular agitation, the party established itself in circles where the Muslims, and especially Shi'ites, were strongly represented. The Communist Party established satellite organisations, particularly the union of Democratic Youth in the Lebanese University, mobilised the rural population of the Bekaa and the South, and encroached into the ranks of trade unions and factory workers in the suburbs of Beirut. Thus, the Communist party created a strong popular following which was mainly Shi'ite.<sup>7</sup> Further Shi'i identification with the Ba'athists, based on a particular creed intermingling revolutionary, socialist and pan-Arabist components, was used as a channel to question the Maronite hegemony. By the mid fifties, the party had already established a preliminary southern base amongst the intellectual and working

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<sup>5</sup> Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community*, p.103.

<sup>6</sup> As it is argued, "the new ideological movements gave an illusion of something new, a new language. A new political style, a new sensibility, made its appearance in once-remote towns and villages....The young flocked to them. More than anything else, the new ideological parties supplied frightened men with some self-respect" F.Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr & the Shia of Lebanon*, p.72.

<sup>7</sup> As has been argued, "from an initial Christian, and more specifically Greek Orthodox, base, the LCP membership rose to 50 percent Shi'a, 15 to 20 percent Sunni and Druze, and 30 percent Christian by 1975." Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community*, p. 106. See also, Michael Suleiman, *Political Parties in Lebanon*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967, p.p. 57-60.



classes in Tyre and Sidon, while it extended and further organised its popular basis in Nabatiyya, Bint Jubayl and other towns and villages of the south.<sup>8</sup> In addition, a great number of Shi'ites attached themselves to the Progressive Socialist Party, led by the Druze leader Kamal Jumblat. The party focused on the need for a popular democratic revolution; it further elaborated its socialist ideology on the presumption that nationalism was a tool of the capitalist classes, in their attempt to divert the popular masses from their demands for social reforms. The demands of Jumblat for agricultural reforms appealed especially to the Shi'i rural population, while the influence of the party extended from Shuf, the main Druze stronghold, to the Shi'i heartland in both the south and the Bekaa.

Consequently, instead of ideology per se, the preceding fundamental changes were the main factors, rendering the Shi'i community ready for an ideological mobilisation, at a subsequent stage. The overwhelmingly impoverished situation of the Shi'ites and the fundamental changes that the community underwent determined the success of the radical movements to mobilise it. It has been argued that these movements succeeded in mobilising their Shi'i recruits because these people were more ready to absorb and listen to these ideas; as they represented the deprived grass roots people, the leftist ideology offered them incentives that could satisfy their calls for change. Instead of genuinely identifying with the leftist discourse and ideology itself, their identification with the leftist parties was the result of their underprivileged status. When they gained social access they came to revolt; this was the meeting point with the left. The leftist ideas became the remedy to their plight, first; then they got to know and identify with the ideology itself.<sup>9</sup>

#### *4.2.2 Musa al-Sadr and Shi'i Communal Organisation*

At a next stage, with the leadership of Musa al-Sadr, the process of change within the community became articulated within the bounds of a communal organisation. His leadership was charismatic in the sense that he touched the most ordinary of the Shi'ites, as he dealt in great depth with their serious day-to-day socio-economic problems. Nevertheless, the profoundly changing circumstances, already under way at the time of his arrival in Lebanon,

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<sup>8</sup> See, Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community*, p. 102.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Habib Sadik, a Shi'i former popular leader of the Lebanese Communist party, 29/4/2000.

determined to a great extent his massive appeal. Consequently, he came to Lebanon at an opportune moment; had he entered the Lebanese scene at an earlier point, it would have been questionable whether he would have had the same appeal. At the time of his arrival in Lebanon, in the aftermath of the serious political crisis, in 1959, the process of socio-political mobilisation of the Shi'i community had already begun.<sup>10</sup> The prior socio-economic transformations and a profound demographic change would have given a significant advantage to the community, especially with regard to its political power vis-à-vis both the dominant Maronite Christian and Sunni Muslim communities. Consequently at that stage, the demographic balance of the National Pact was no longer the same, as the Shi'i community was considered to be the largest single sectarian community; this could have further implications in the parliamentary representation of the community. Hence, the ninety nine-seat parliament included only nineteen Shi'i seats and thirty seats for the Maronites. If demographics were to be taken into account, the Shi'ites *"would gain as many as 10 seats while the Maronites would lose an equal number. And if parliamentary representation were to be split evenly between Muslims and Christians ...the Shi'a would claim the lion's share of the Muslim seats, much to the detriment of the previously dominant Sunnis..."*<sup>11</sup>

As a first stage, however, Musa al-Sadr had to establish his legitimacy within the community itself. Towards this end, he first approached the Shi'i emigrants in Africa, to whom he presented his programme. In their attempt to establish their position, the new social classes, the Shi'i emigrants being amongst these, experienced a rising feeling of disillusion, as they realised the presence of communal barriers restricting social and political mobility.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, the whole viability of the Lebanese institutional system was called into question and Musa al-Sadr set up his strategy to break the intra-communal political insularity. He achieved that with the promotion of a new counter-elite, capable of challenging the long established leadership of the *zu'ama*; and hence, to ensure his own legitimacy as a communal leader. With the changes introduced by the Shehabist administration, namely the increase of Shi'i representation in the civil service and various state institutions, the community became all the more political in its demands. A new type of leadership, consisted of the Shi'i emigrants and the newly emerged middle classes, rose to challenge the traditional Shi'i leadership. In

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Muhammad Abdelhamid Beydoun, Deputy of Amal in the Lebanese Parliament, 29/3/2000.

<sup>11</sup> Augustus Richard Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987, p.17.

<sup>12</sup> See, Elizabeth Picard, *The Lebanese Shi'a and political violence*, p.8.

effect, the identification of these new social classes with Musa al-Sadr and his movement served as an outlet for social, economic and political grievances, concerning social and political changes. The main objective of these classes, nonetheless, was not to destroy but to gain access to the political system.

Through his actions, and by drawing attention to himself, Musa al-Sadr rendered the Shi'ites more visible as a community. At first, he worked closely with, and within, the Lebanese State, showing his fidelity to the institutions. He could sense that, in the 1960s, the ripe moment for achieving a meaningful opposition against the state had not come yet. He knew very well that the whole process had to be incremental in order to prove fruitful at the end. Hence, as a first part of his social programmes, he established the vocational training institute in Tyre and a number of preliminary organisations.<sup>13</sup>

In November 19, 1967, the most significant Shi'i political institution, the Supreme Islamic Shi'ite Council, was created. Shi'ites were the last of the Muslim communities to ask for a political institution of their own, functioning in the same way that both the Sunni and the Druze Councils<sup>14</sup> were. Until then, the Supreme Official Muslim Islamic Council represented the Shi'ites; nonetheless, this was authorised to speak for the Sunni community at large. The Shi'ite Council, however, was not officially established until May 18, 1969, when its existence was publicly declared by the state, regardless of the opposition coming from various sources.<sup>15</sup> The formation of a new institutional framework was strongly opposed by the Shi'i traditional leaders, the *zu'ama*, who regarded the new political forces attached to Musa al-Sadr as potential challengers of their long established power. Notwithstanding this opposition, the establishment of the Council formalised the religious and institutional independence of the

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<sup>13</sup> He transformed the Jam'iyyat al-Bir wa al-Ihsan benevolent society from a religious and charitable organisation into the main centre through which his social programs passed. In addition, by making use of some half a million Lebanese pounds granted by the government's social services, a bank loan and several contributions from the Shi'i community, he founded the Social Institute in Tyre for the orphans and the poor. In 1963, he created the Girls Home, a training institute in nursing and sewing. For more details on these institutions, see Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community*, p.p. 135-136.

<sup>14</sup> The Sunnite, Supreme Official Islamic Council and the Druze Doctrinal Council were created by the state in 1955 and 1962 respectively.

<sup>15</sup> The intervening period between the initial proposal and its actual implementation could be explained in the light of an increasing reaction coming from the Sunnite establishment, which all these years represented the Muslims collectively and monopolised the official title of 'religious leader of the Muslim Community'. Moreover, the Shi'i religious establishment voiced its objections, on the basis of the potential financial dependence of the religious classes on the state, a case supposedly contradicting the Shi'i historical and doctrinal opposition to unjust rule. On this opposition, see Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community*, p. 140.

Shi'i community in Lebanon.<sup>16</sup> In May 23, 1969, Musa al-Sadr was elected its first chairman for a renewable six-year term.

At a next stage, after a period of relative socio-economic improvement, in the early seventies the state proved unable to cope with the rising rates of inflation and unemployment. While the prior improvement brought rising expectations amongst the population, when at a subsequent stage the government proved ineffective in dealing with social grievances, a widespread disappointment served, in a way, to justify the rising expectations of the population.<sup>17</sup> The result was an increasing mobilisation of "*a large number of popular, ideological, and sectarian organisations, all of which rose in defence of the under privileged and the deprived, with special emphasis on the migrant poverty belt surrounding Beirut.*"<sup>18</sup> The internal problems were fuelled, at a period when the civil order in Lebanon became increasingly disrupted due to external factors; mainly the Palestinian encroachment onto Lebanese soil and the subsequent retaliatory Israeli attacks. The Cairo Accord, brokered in 1969 between the PLO and the Lebanese State, granted the Palestinians the free control of both the Palestinian camps and their military action on the border with Israel.

The Shi'ites suffered the most from the Palestinian raids and the Israeli reprisals in Lebanon. The failure of the state to defend the south from the Israeli raids<sup>19</sup> brought a large number of Shi'i refugees to Beirut. In the period between May and June of 1970, after massive Israeli retaliatory measures against southern villages, Musa al-Sadr organised a general strike so as to

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<sup>16</sup> As Fuad Ajami argues, "the Shia had to build institutions of their own. They needed to break free and place themselves a little further away from the Sunni control and judgement. The formation of an independent sectarian body was the clearest way of doing it, and the most Lebanese way at that. The country of sects acknowledged the coming of age of another sect. A community set apart from the Sunnis by doctrine and by a legacy of insularity and backwardness had to go its own way." Fuad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr & the Shia of Lebanon*, p.115.

<sup>17</sup> Consequently, a highly polarised environment emerged, "revealing the sharpening of various gaps existing within the Lebanese society, gaps between the rich and the poor, the élites and the masses, the rural and the urban." Fuad Khuri, "The Social Dynamics of the 1975-76 War in Lebanon", in *Armed Forces and Society*, vol.7, no.3, Spring 1981, p. 398.

<sup>18</sup> Fuad Khuri, "The Social Dynamics of the 1975-76 War in Lebanon", p. 399.

<sup>19</sup> In June 14, 1968, for the first time in the history of the region, a southern Lebanese village, Mays al-Jabal, was shelled by Israeli artillery, leaving fifty-six wounded. In December 26, Israel used a Palestinian attack on an El Al Boeing 707 in Athens as a pretext to mount a forty-five-minute bombardment against Beirut International Airport, destroying thirteen aircrafts. In July 30, August 11 and 13 and in September 1969, Israel made several attacks on the south, targeting the 'Arqub region. In May 1970, after heavy Israeli reprisals, an Israeli force of one hundred tanks and two thousand troops marched into the south, killing nine Lebanese and wounding nineteen others, as well as a large number of Palestinians. Also, an hour after an Israeli bus was hit by artillery from the south, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May, Israel shelled the Lebanese border villages, leaving twenty civilians killed, forty wounded, and eighty three homes destroyed. For more details on these attacks, see Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community*, p.p. 143-144.

protest against the state negligence towards the problems of the south. Through the strike, he demanded the immediate state provision of defence for the south, and financial provision for the Lebanese who fled from their villages. The strike obliged the government to construct a draft law and to commit thirty million Lebanese pounds towards the formation of the Council of the South. Indeed, in June 6, 1970 the Council was created, as a separate public office, held under the control of the Prime Minister, who supervised the distribution of funds for the south.<sup>20</sup>

In a rather tense atmosphere in Lebanon, in 1974, Musa al-Sadr organised mass demonstrations and calls for radical reforms. In one of these rallies, he declared the formation of the movement of the Deprived, *Harakat al-Mahroumin*, the harbinger of the Amal militia. The movement he created as well as he himself were very cautious at first not to take a clear communal stand. The movement was presented at times as patriotic, addressing all the dispossessed Lebanese citizens, at times as representing the Shi'ites. As it had to compete with the leftist parties in terms of constituency, it left the boundaries of that constituency vague. On the one hand, there was a strong base within the new movement, derived from the Shi'i history and tradition. On the other hand though, the movement presented itself as the agent of a wider mission to save Lebanon from the serious social crisis. As the popularity of Musa al-Sadr, and subsequently his movement, rose to attract the Shi'i members of the left, the left inescapably faced an impasse. It had to appeal confessionally, as most of its members were Shi'ites, but at the same time it had to keep its image as a secular movement.<sup>21</sup> The popularity of Musa al-Sadr and the newly emerged Shi'i organisation rose to challenge the leftist groups' attempts to secure and extend their constituencies, especially in the south.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the movement eventually became established as communal; as has been argued, "*the inter-community co-operation of the Movement of the Deprived soon began to show its limitations. Threatened by mobilized union members and by the class struggle led by leftist parties, the ruling elites actively sought to maintain the existing community-based cleavages in the political system through patronage networks. Consequently, the movement took on a community-based*

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<sup>20</sup> For more details on the strike and the creation of the Council of the South, see Thom Sicking and Shereen Khairallah, *The Shi'a Awakening in Lebanon: A Search For Radical Change in a Traditional Way*, p. 109.

<sup>21</sup> Interview (5/4/2000) with Waddah Charara, Shi'i journalist, in the Lebanese newspaper *An Nahar* and one of the Shi'i intellectuals identified, during this period, with the Left.

<sup>22</sup> As Habib Sadik revealed in an interview he gave to the *Daily Star*, one of the main obstacles to leftwing victories in the southern constituencies was Musa al-Sadr himself. For more details on these views, see, "Politicians Bicker while South Suffers", *Daily Star*, February 3, 1975, p. 6.



character under the aegis of the SISC, and specifically Musa Sadr himself.”<sup>23</sup> The increasing communal tendency and the fact that communal loyalties began to transcend the prior class attachments was demonstrated in 1974. It was then that the Supreme Islamic Shi’ite Council formulated the Shi’i demands. Hence, what the Shi’ites were asking for was the enhancement of quotas in the public sector posts, the implementation of the Litani project, irrigation programs in the western part of the Bekaa, construction of schools and hospitals, protection of tobacco cultivators and development of underprivileged areas.<sup>24</sup> Socio-economic demands that at a prior stage were expressed by the class-based organisations, under the new circumstances were given a communal tone, voiced by the supreme communal institution under the banner of ‘Shi’i Demands’.

At a next stage, the sort of legitimacy that both the leader and the movement gained, as the representative of the Shi’i community, vis-à-vis the traditional Shi’i leadership of the *zu’ama*, was revealed in two ways. First, in the 1974 legislative by-election in Nabatiyya, the candidate affiliated with Musa al-Sadr defeated the candidate backed by the parliamentary speaker, the powerful *za’im* of Nabatiyya, Kamal As’ad. Second, Musa al-Sadr’s term as the Chairman of the Supreme Islamic Shi’ite Council was renewed for another eighteen years, until he reached sixty-five years of age. This election took place in April 1975, despite vigorous opposition from the then Speaker of the Parliament, Kamal al-As’ad.<sup>25</sup> Both these developments were treated as indicators of a profound change and the coming of a new elite, representing collectively the Shi’i community.

In essence, as the changing socio-economic circumstances eroded the established networks of communal leadership, new political forces rose to capitalise on the changing context and to gain a voice so as to speak on behalf of the community. The crisis in state legitimacy and the emergence of a powerful communal leadership led to the creation of communal institutions and organisation. Nevertheless, this development became viable within the context of the Lebanese State itself, and its inability to deal with the increasing internal and external pressures. Hence,

<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Picard, “The Lebanese Shi’a and Political Violence in Lebanon”, in David Apter (ed.), *The Legitimation of violence*, New York: New York University Press, 1997, p. 202. Along the same lines, if more explicitly, Mr Habib Sadik made a relevant point, in that, in effect, the political establishment promoted Musa al-Sadr’s objectives, in its attempt to fight the left and to maintain the confessional regime. This argument was expressed in an interview he gave to the author in 3/4/2000.

<sup>24</sup> See the document of Shi’i demands, as it was first published in al Hayat in 12/2/74, translated by Shereen Khairallah, in Thom Sicking and Shereen Khairallah, *The Shi’a Awakening in Lebanon: A Search For Radical Change in a Traditional Way*, p.p. 103-106.

<sup>25</sup> For details on this issue, see, “Asaad Opposed to Renewing Sadr’s Term”, in Daily Star, March 22, 1975. See also the following issues of Daily star; March 29, 1975, “ Shi’ites Decide Today on Sadr’s Extension”; April 30, 1975, “Shiites Unanimously Vote in Favor of Extending Sadr’s Term for Life.”

these communal institutions challenged both the prevalent state system and the existing patterns of communal leadership that the state structure had long established. In effect, the newly established institutional framework provided the community and its political demands with a formalised political structure, alternative to the institutional state structure. Within the new structure, communal objectives could be attained more effectively.

#### ***4.3 Representation of Shi'i Mobilisation: Legitimation of new Channels of Authority***

Throughout the phase of Shi'i mass migration from the rural areas to the urban centers, Beirut in particular, Shi'i rituals were represented so as to give meaning to the new urban setting. Having studied this period Fuad Khuri<sup>26</sup> came to some fundamental conclusions regarding the Shi'i sectarian identity vis-à-vis their traditional familial allegiances. Fuad Khuri studied two southern suburbs of Beirut, Shiah and Ghabayri, homogeneously inhabited by Maronites and Shi'i populations respectively. Even though at a prior stage both these suburbs constituted one village, during the period under study they became divided into two municipalities. In effect, he argues, as the Shi'i newcomers in Beirut became highly urbanised, they were detached from their familial allegiances; alternatively, they attached themselves to the communal allegiances as a way to participate in the balance of power. In the case of the Shi'ites of Ghabayri, *Ashura* became the main indicator of such a transformation. Before the arrival of Shi'i migrants in Ghabayri, *Ashura* was celebrated privately in homes. Even though in their native villages the Shi'i migrants celebrated *Ashura* in the same private way, when they came to Beirut, they were the first to celebrate *Ashura* publicly. In this way, *Ashura* was used by the new settlers as a counterbalance vis-à-vis the traditional old families. *Ashura* became a signifier of the new settlers' commitment to the wider symbols of Shi'ism,<sup>27</sup> affirming their confessional allegiances, at the expense of their tribal loyalties. In effect, a separate confessional identity was expressed in the realm of politics, as these new families became

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<sup>26</sup> See, Fuad I. Khuri, "Sectarian Loyalty among Rural Migrants in two Lebanese Suburbs: A Stage between Family and National Allegiance", in Richard Antoun and Iliya Harik, (eds.), *Rural Politics and Social Change in the Middle East*, London: Indiana University Press, 1972, p.p.198-213.

<sup>27</sup> Fuad I. Khuri, "Sectarian Loyalty among Rural Migrants in two Lebanese Suburbs: A Stage between Family and National Allegiance", in Richard Antoun and Iliya Harik, (eds.), *Rural Politics and Social Change in the Middle East*, p. 207.

influential in the suburb; it was after their active initiative that the Shi'i municipality of Ghbairy was formed.

During the same period, in the setting of the Shi'i villages, *Ashura* continued to be a rite of submission to the traditional religious and political elites. In a period of increasing alienation of the Shi'i mass population from the state, the rite demonstrated the indifference of these populations towards the world of temporal power. Drawing upon this rising sense of disaffection, the parties of the left used the ritual of *Ashura* so as to establish their ideology. In the annual celebration of *Ashura* in Nabatiyya in 1970, a group of young people affiliated with the leftist parties, urged the mass of believers to abandon the self-punitive practices, and to turn their anger and vengeance on the enemies of the nation and the enemies of class. This sort of discourse brought about a serious reaction of both the clerical establishment and the state, so that the local cleric, *Shaykh Ja'far Sâdik*, lectured about the necessity of maintaining the rite of flagellation.<sup>28</sup> Hence, repentance and submission were kept alive while the voice of political action remained forbidden.<sup>29</sup>

However, in 1974, Imam Musa al-Sadr and the movement of the Deprived succeeded in what the parties of the left had previously failed. As Musa al-Sadr had to deal with the leftist groups in terms of mobilisation upon the same social and political issues, he formulated a discourse borrowed from Shi'i tradition and history. He identified Shi'ites with the oppressed at large, demanding social justice for all the deprived, whatever their sect. With the association of the Shi'i tradition with the current socio-economic and political issues, Musa al-Sadr united a disparate audience; constituted of both the Shi'i segments that earlier had identified with the left, as well as those who did not identify with class movements and were more attached to Shi'i tradition. From passive and lifeless instruments, which did not stir up the emotions of believers, Shi'i sermons became instruments of social reform and political liberation, instilling the active participation of the mass Shi'i population.<sup>30</sup> They became the medium of the Shi'i struggle for economic and political development and a channel through which Musa al-Sadr, and the elites adjacent to him, could communicate with the Shi'i mass population.

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<sup>28</sup> On this occasion of *Ashura*, see Elizabeth Picard "De la 'Communauté-Classe' à la Résistance 'National'. Pour une Analyse du Role des Chiïtes dans le Système Politique Libanais", p.p. 999-1027.

<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth Picard "De la 'Communauté-Classe' à la Résistance 'National'. Pour une Analyse du Role des Chiïtes dans le Système Politique Libanais", p. 1009.

<sup>30</sup> On the functions of Islamic sermon as a channel for reform and development, see, Bruce M. Borthwick, "The Islamic Sermon as a Channel of Political Communication", in *Middle East Journal*, no. XXI, 1967.

Consequently, in a period of increasing Shi'i discontent against the state, Musa al-Sadr awoke the latent moral forces of the community. To this end, the symbols, rituals, values and heroes of the community became an object of reinterpretation, representing the current Shi'i struggle. With the invocation of the Shi'i myths and symbols as signifiers of the present situation of the community, Musa al-Sadr reformed and modernised Shi'i religious ideology. The recollection of the 'martyrs' of the past became a cause for the martyrs of the present, the victims of the Israeli aggressive raids against the south. The movement distinguished these events as exemplary of every struggle for justice, resistance and combat.<sup>31</sup>

The choice of place and time connected the mythical time of the historical event and the social context of the current political struggle. It was within the traditional space of the Shi'i religiosity, the excluded parts of the country, in Ba'albek, Nabatiyya, Tyre, where misery and poverty stood in plain contrast with the affluence of Beirut, that the drama of Kerbala was adjusted to the *Imam's* militant calls for action. In 1973, *Ashura* coincided with the strike of the tobacco planters, while during the celebration of *Ashura* in 1974, the creation of the Movement of the Deprived was declared.<sup>32</sup> On many occasions, Musa al-Sadr spoke of the drama of Kerbala as a 'revolution' that "*did not die in the sands of Karbala, it flowed into the life stream of the Islamic world, and passed from generation to generation, even to our day. It is a deposit place in our hands so that we may profit from it, that we draw out from it as from a source a new reform, a new position, a new movement, a new revolution to repel darkness, to stop tyranny, and to pulverize evil.*"<sup>33</sup>

Communal aggression against the state was rationalised with the formulation of a communal perception of a state that was unjust and indifferent to the plight of its citizens. Regarding the state's role vis-à-vis its citizens, Musa al-Sadr spoke of the ultimate obligation of any state to provide justice and dignity for all of its citizens. He, moreover, denounced the presence of an exclusive authority, repressing and neglecting the rights of the citizens. It is in these cases that those in authority threaten the very existence of the country, as a result of their conduct.<sup>34</sup> At

<sup>31</sup> See, Salim Nasr, "Mobilisation communautaire et symbolique religieuse : L'Imam Sadr et les Chi'ites du Liban (1970-1975)", in Olivier Carré et Paul Dumont (eds.), *Radicalismes Islamiques*, p.p. 143-147.

<sup>32</sup> Yves Gonzalez-Quijano, "Les interpretations d'un rite: celebrations de la 'Achoura au Liban", p.12.

<sup>33</sup> Extract from a speech Musa al-Sadr gave in early February 1974, in the Amiliyya College on the occasion of *Ashura*. Translated in Thom S.J. Sicking and Shereen Khairallah, *The Shi'a Awakening in Lebanon: A Search For Radical Change in a Traditional Way*, p.115.

<sup>34</sup> From a speech he gave to the border village of Yatir during the celebration of *Ashura*, in 1974. For more details on this speech, see, Thom S.J. Sicking and Shereen Khairallah, *The Shi'a Awakening in Lebanon: A Search For Radical Change in a Traditional Way*, p.p. 116-117.

another occasion, he attacked the whole legitimacy of the rulers by stating, “choose the people you want, spend your plunder as you wish. But the rights of the people, of the citizen, of regions and communities must be realised...otherwise your monopolization and despotism will turn against you. The government of unbelievers will last, but not that of tyrants.”<sup>35</sup> Instead, the legitimacy of the community was counter-declared with vigour; “We are the community of Husayn, following in his train, avengers with him, building history as he wished it. We want our word to be understood and our aim known.”<sup>36</sup> At this point, the mobilisation of the community was stirred, as a revolt against ‘tyranny’; “brothers, line up in the row of your choice: that of tyranny or that of Husayn. I am certain that you will not choose anything but the row of revolution and martyrdom for the realization of justice and the destruction of tyranny.”<sup>37</sup>

Gradually, due to the great appeal his discourse had for the Shi’i mass population, rather than the delimited title of the ‘Mufti’, he took the prestigious title of the ‘Imam’. Carrying the intense overtones of Shi’i history and tradition, this title gave him the ultimate legitimacy of the Hidden Imam, the Mahdi, the highest persona of Shi’ism. Hence, he clearly identified himself as the defender of both the community and the Shi’i faith.

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<sup>35</sup> Extract from the speech Musa al-Sadr gave in Amiliyya College, translated in Thom S.J. Sicking and Shereen Khairallah, *The Shi’a Awakening in Lebanon: A Search For Radical Change in a Traditional Way*, p.116.

<sup>36</sup> Thom S.J. Sicking and Shereen Khairallah, *The Shi’a Awakening in Lebanon: A Search For Radical Change in a Traditional Way*, p.116.

<sup>37</sup> Thom S.J. Sicking and Shereen Khairallah, *The Shi’a Awakening in Lebanon: A Search For Radical Change in a Traditional Way*, p.116.



#### *4.4 Conclusion*

The political mobilisation of communal identity, as presented in this chapter, is indicative of the legitimisation or not of the state's overarching authority. Consequently, Shi'i political mobilisation proved that state legitimacy was far from being a given; in fact, entities other than the state, can ascribe for themselves all the major allegiances that the state ascribes to its citizens. As the Shi'i case indicated, the processes of socio-economic and political change shaped the political mobilisation of the community. First, they raised the existing contradictions between advantaged and disadvantaged segments of the population. Second, they led underprivileged segments of the population to realise their collective disadvantage. Third, the continuing ineffectiveness of the state to deal with the existing socio-economic gaps increased the potential for conflict between socially mobilised segments of the population and the ruling political elites.

Nevertheless, in the case of the Shi'i community, change per se did not unilaterally lead to communal mobilisation; a set of variables, such as ideology, new communal leadership and new institutional arrangements along communal lines, intervened to interact with one another and, in their turn to shape Shi'i political mobilisation. First, new ideological movements emerged to capitalise on the changing socio-economic context of Shi'i community. Thus, as the community was already in the throes of change, the leftist parties adapted their ideologies so as to articulate more concretely the wider Shi'i discontent. In addition, at that period the huge regional appeal of Nassirism led a great deal of leftist movements to adapt parts of the Nassirist ideology. This sort of discourse attracted a wide audience, including the most disadvantaged segments of the population in particular. An overwhelming proportion of the Shi'i population became attached to the new ideological parties as an outlet for their grievances.

In their turn, new networks of communal authority rose to build their legitimacy on the prior Shi'i ideological and socio-economic mobilisation. The new communal leadership emerged at an opportune time, in the aftermath of the first Lebanese civil war, when the prevalent state structure was already in a serious crisis. Consequently, when Musa al-Sadr came to Lebanon, these processes were already under way. Hence, both Musa al-Sadr's legitimacy and the legitimacy of the new political elites he sponsored were built on the already existing changes. It was at the subsequent stage, that the legitimacy of this new communal leadership was extended substantially in two ways; first, with the construction of fundamental communal institutions

and organisations; second, with the re-elaboration of the Shi'i communal myths and symbols and their incorporation into a dynamic and revolutionary discourse. This new discourse was informed by the Shi'i themes of revolution, nevertheless adjusted to the prevalent socio-economic and political circumstances of the community. This new discourse was constructed so as to encompass the overlapping communal and class attachments of the Shi'i population.

In effect all these factors dealt with, in the context of this chapter, socio-economic change, ideological mobilisation, as well as changes in communal leadership and institutional framework interacted with the diminished state legitimacy so as to effectively induce Shi'i political mobilisation. It was through these processes that the community regained its collective potential to challenge the authority of both the state and the state-sponsored traditional networks of leadership. Consequently, it was after assuming communal legitimacy that the communal organisation, at the following stage of warfare, rose to monopolise what has been traditionally labelled as 'state coercive capability'; and it was through this new role that the military organisation induced new sources of identification for the Shi'i mass population.

***PART III***

***State Destruction***

## ***5. 'State making' and 'State Unmaking': An Analogy***

This chapter presents a different socio-political context, one of state destruction and warfare in Lebanon. Warfare in Lebanon led to the uprooting of all the previous channels of authority and the emergence of new ones. Once they became involved in the warfare, and in the absence of the state, the previous communal organisations predominated as the main agents of coercion within society. As long as warfare continued and increased in intensity, these militias were entitled to a long list of other privileges and rights, derived from their newly acquired role. They took up all the main roles, traditionally labeled as state prerogatives. The militias were the ones to create organisations that distributed the socio-economic rewards to the population; and also, to forge new allegiances, according to their rapidly changing interests in the course of warfare. Consequently, not only did the militias function similarly to what has been so far perceived as state authority, but also they reproduced the main components of the Ottoman, Mandate and Independent Lebanon. Thus the militias acted similarly to the *zu'ama*, they reproduced the same external logic and the overlapping loyalties of the prior contexts.

### ***5.1 Military Organisation as 'state-like' Entity: State Capabilities revisited***

#### ***5.1.1 State Disintegration: Rise of the Military Organisation as Agent of Coercion***

On the eve of war, Lebanese society was already entrenched in heavy tension, manifested at the internal level of inter-confessional relations and also at the external level, especially as far as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is concerned. The failed state-control of the mounting socio-economic and defence gaps brought the militarisation of actors and attitudes. The rise of Suleiman Franjeh to the Presidency and his determination to destroy the social and security bases of the Shehabist state administration paved the way for developments that rapidly got out of hand. As the stricter Shehabist policies were reversed to the pre-1958 *laissez-faire* policies, an uncontrollable influx of Arab oil money, gained from the commercial and financial boom, fed both the banks and the Lebanese importers and merchants. As the state was unable to evenly redistribute this money amongst the relevant strata of the population, the rates of inflation and unemployment were blown to unprecedented levels, stirring the social unrest of the great proportion of lower strata of the population, which became even poorer. Moreover,

the dismantling of the Shehabist security apparatus of the Deuxième Bureau led to the militarisation of the Lebanese political groups, as the Palestinians rose to provide military and financial support to groups most of which, at a prior stage, acted within the framework of the Deuxième Bureau.<sup>1</sup>

The most powerful partners of the Palestinians were the parties and the organisations of the left that united under the leadership of Kamal Jumblat, into the so-called National Movement (NM).<sup>2</sup> This collaboration between the Palestinians and the leftist groups resulted from the spill over effect that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict brought to the domestic political scene within Lebanon. The Palestinian presence in Lebanon radicalised a large part of the Muslim intelligentsia and masses, especially after the defeat of 1967. Consequently, the newly radicalised segments of the population challenged the status quo and especially the existing balance of power between the Maronites and the Muslims. The Palestinian activity provoked a series of retaliatory attacks from Israel against the south of Lebanon. Eventually, the state became the main source of grievances, as it proved unable to protect large segments of the population daily threatened by Israel.

These developments did not prove to be without immediate consequences for the Shi'i community. The rising security problem in the south and the inability of the state to deal with the already militarised environment of the period led to the creation by Musa al-Sadr of the Amal militia. The latter militia was formed as the military wing of the movement of the Deprived and came into the open some months after the eruption of war. What determined the course of military activity amongst the political groups, including the Shi'ites, was the increasingly disrupted environment of the period. The security problem had been an issue for some years, since the end of the 1960s. However, the issue was addressed at that opportune time of rising radicalisation and militarisation of the relevant parties with the creation of a Shi'i army committed, as is argued, to the defence of the South.<sup>3</sup> The failed state legitimacy

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<sup>1</sup> On these developments, see Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut: The Sunni Muslim Community and the Lebanese State 1840 - 1985*, p.p. 159-160

<sup>2</sup> This coalition included the genuine left parties of CP and OACAL, the non-Marxist left-wing nationalist Baathists and the leftist adherents of the SSNP. For more details on the National Movement coalition and its leader Kamal Jumblat, see Theodor Hanf, *Co-existence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, p.p. 188-189.

<sup>3</sup> As has been argued, Amal was formed by Musa al-Sadr, for the mounting defence needs of the south. Amal was not created as a political party; and definitely Amal was not created as a militia that was to get involved in the war; before the war, Musa al-Sadr took steps to prevent it from erupting; when war erupted, he tried to decrease its effects by insisting on the need for dialogue and national unity. What he was asking for was the change of the whole system. When he formed Amal, he was obliged to do so. It was not something planned. His revolt was against the government's failure to protect the south.



eventually brought the radicalisation of issues and actors. The security problem of the south, as well as the Palestinian encroachment, indicated the existing crisis at the level of state authority. The Palestinian encroachment was very much relevant to the creation of Amal, as the Palestinian organisation was the main agent for the provision of both arms and significant military training to the Shi'i militia.

Consequently, as soon as war erupted on 13 April 1975<sup>4</sup> and widespread clashes broke out between Maronite militiamen on the one hand, and the National Movement and Palestinian militiamen on the other, the inherent tension within both the Lebanese State and society became apparent. The conflict was soon to be transferred to the institutional level, with the President using the existing friction to his benefit, and the deterioration in the relationship between both the main institutional pillars of the system, the President and the Prime Minister. The heavy strain of open warfare on the state system rendered the latter incapable of coping with the opposing factions and their respective claims.<sup>5</sup> The result was that even though up until that point the Army seldom intervened militarily,<sup>6</sup> its eventual involvement led to its disintegration into various dissident groups.<sup>7</sup> In essence, the traditional principle of 'no winner

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He did not want to form a militia to do the work of the army. Through his demands, he was pushing towards the strengthening and not the weakening of the army. When the army became ineffective, he started to encourage people to defend themselves. He urged the militias to give their weapons to the people of the south so as to protect themselves. Information, taken out of the author's interview with Musa Al-Sadr's son, Sadriddin al-Sadr, 11/2/2000.

<sup>4</sup> War in Lebanon broke out, when an unknown group fired at a Sunday church gathering attended by Pierre Jumayyil, leader of the Maronite Phalanges, killing his bodyguard and two others. In subsequent retaliation, the Maronite militiamen ambushed a buss passing through the neighbourhood, massacring the 28 passengers (mostly Palestinians) on board.

<sup>5</sup> The developments of the period are as follows; as the security situation deteriorated, both the issues of reform and security were raised. The escalation of fighting up to the north brought up demands for Frangieh's resignation. A meeting of the Committee of National Dialogue proved, once more, the substantial lack of consensus on the fundamental issues. The relations between the President and the Premier became so strained that only after Syrian and Palestinian mediation did they cooperate with each other, after agreeing on the issue of reform; a concession to the National Movement. Nevertheless, deadlock emerged in the relation of the National Movement with the Phalanges, as both got involved in a vicious cycle of retaliatory measures against each other. The hints of partition, found in the Maronite 'federal' formulas, caused the reaction of the Muslims and the National Movement, as well as Syria. The President introduced a 14-point reform programme, focusing on the equal representation of both Christians and Muslims in the parliament and the civil service posts. It also stated the declaration of Lebanon as an Arab country. On these developments, see, Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979, p.p.48-50.

<sup>6</sup> Widespread reservations emerged regarding the Army's involvement in the fighting, out of a fear of split in any case of its involvement. Nevertheless, several militant Christian leaders called for its deployment, implying a prevalent notion of the Army as a 'Christian Army'. Notwithstanding the latter, up until that point, the Army's intervention was confined to some conciliatory missions of separating the opposing factions, most of the times conducted with reservations and very little means.

<sup>7</sup> Eventually the Army disintegrated, in January 1976, when a Sunni lieutenant, Ahmed Khatib, organised a mutiny; with the help of some other Sunni recruits and after having acquired a major part

no loser' which had prevailed since the first civil war, was replaced by the struggle of each of the contending groups for domination over and the exclusion of the others. The confessional allegiances of the combatant groups emerged to the forefront, stirring subsequently the confessional affiliations of the various segments of the population.

Even though war made the state in the European context, warfare in Lebanon 'unmade' the state and replaced it with other entities, such as sectarian military organisations. In the absence of any other prevalent organisation, these militias exerted a great deal of control over the course of political developments. This dimension became quite prevalent at a subsequent stage, with the outbreak of the 'battle of the barracks' between the Maronites and the Muslims. At this point, the resignation of the President Suleiman Franjeh became inevitable, while the overriding predominance of the military over the political developments, culminated in the shelling of the Presidential Palace and the powerful Syrian intervention.<sup>8</sup> The subsequent election of Elias Sarkis to the Presidency<sup>9</sup> gave some hope of reconciliation, which was, at a later stage, reinforced through the Riyadh Summit.<sup>10</sup> With the official declaration of the cease-fire, what became apparent was that, "*the deterrent forces stopped the blood shed, but they could not eliminate militarism, acquisition of arms, and the mutual fear and hatred the war had rooted in the country.*"<sup>11</sup>

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of the Army's heavy armaments, he was self-proclaimed as the founder of a Lebanese Arab Army (LAA). For more details on the collapse of the Lebanese Army, See, Theodor Hanf, *Co-existence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, p.p. 214-216.

<sup>8</sup> On the Syrian intervention throughout the 1975-76 war, see Karen Rasler, "Internationalised Civil War: A Dynamic Analysis of the Syrian Intervention in Lebanon", in *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 27, no. 3, September 1983, pp. 421-456.

<sup>9</sup> The subsequent election of Elias Sarkis to the Presidency was viewed as the only hope for reconciliation. His declaration of Lebanon as a united country created a more secure environment, at a time when the fear of partition was more than imminent. He offered his support to the Palestinian cause under the condition that the Palestinians should strictly adhere to the Cairo Agreement. The Lebanese government proclaimed the Syrian military presence in Lebanon. See Robert Fisk, *Pity the Nation: The Abduction of Lebanon*, London: Atheneum, 1990, p. 86.

<sup>10</sup> Saudi-Arabia intervened drastically, declaring the Riyadh Summit for the resolution of the conflict and the enforcement of a general cease-fire. The resolutions of the summit included, first, a general cease-fire supervised by an inter-Arab force of 30,000 men under the leadership of the Lebanese President Sarkis. It also declared the Palestinian withdrawal to areas in the south and their compliance with the Cairo Accord. In addition, a political dialogue was due in Lebanon towards national reconciliation. Once more, the Syrian presence was recognised tacitly as the main component of the inter-Arab force. Under the cloak of an 'Arab Deterrent Force' some 6000 Syrian troops and 200 tanks entered victoriously in Beirut and occupied the entire city, in order to 'restore' the balance. This arrangement could be perceived as a tacit agreement among United States, Israel and Syria to avert the establishment of a pro-Palestinian order in Lebanon at a particular moment when the left and its PLO allies were in a prevalent position.

<sup>11</sup> Fuad I. Khuri, "The Social Dynamics of the 1975-76 War in Lebanon", p. 403.

In effect, the rapid developments of this premier phase of war seemed to reinforce the argument that warfare, and the different course it took at various instances, shaped the Shi'i communal authority accordingly. At the first stage of war, most of the Shi'ites fought in the ranks of the National Movement. Amal did not get involved in the fighting due to its lack of adequate military might, being a nascent military organisation, as well as the practices of Musa al-Sadr. In fact during this period, Musa al-Sadr made desperate efforts to stop the war, while his stand became quite distant from the radicalised and fighting spirit of the combatants.<sup>12</sup> The heavy militant spirit of the period had entrenched Lebanese society, as well as the Shi'ite masses in particular; neither Musa al-Sadr nor his movement could compete with the massive supply of arms that the leftist groups enjoyed. His own leadership, considered to take a moderate stand, could not address the already radicalised spirit of the Shi'ites. The piecemeal involvement of his militia in the fighting led most of the Shi'i fighters to conscript in the ranks of the better-organised and equipped militias of the left. In addition, the war seriously detracted from the popularity of Musa al-Sadr, as he was regarded as being too close to Syria, at a period when Syrian involvement was particularly unpopular among the Muslims. His popularity further waned with the Phalangist-led fall of the Beirut's eastern suburbs, al-Nab'ah quarters, that left a large number of the Shi'i inhabitants killed and thousands of poor Shi'i families homeless.<sup>13</sup>

In the previous period, the demands of both Amal and the National Movement converged as far as the secularisation of the state and the abolition of confessionalism was concerned.<sup>14</sup> At a subsequent stage the waning of the National Movement's credibility<sup>15</sup> paved the way for

<sup>12</sup> For more information on the attitude of Musa al-Sadr during the early stages of war, see the following relevant articles published in the press of the period; Daily Star, March 23, 1975, "Sadr: Lebanon's Crisis Is Social Not Confessional"; Daily Star, April 27, 1975, "Sadr Says Conflict To Be Resolved Soon"; Daily Star, April 28, 1975, "Sadr Urges End to Statements Aggravating Current Situation".

<sup>13</sup> With regard to the fall of al-Nab'ah, the rumours held the personal representative of Musa al-Sadr, Shaykh Muhammad Ya'qub, responsible for collaborating with the Phalangists and the Syrians, leading to the massacre of the Shi'ite families. See, Asad Abu Khalil, "The Palestinian-Shi'ite war in Lebanon: an Examination of its Origins", Third World Affairs, 1988, p. 83.

<sup>14</sup> Both groups heavily criticised the state failure to handle the social crisis and end the power of the traditional elites. Both approved the Cairo Accord. For an elaborate comparison of the programmes of Amal and the Left in Lebanon, see, Elizabeth Picard, "Political Identities and Communal Identities: Shifting Mobilization among the Lebanese Shi'a through ten years of War, 1975-1985", in D. Ronen and D. Thomson, (eds.), *Ethnicity, Politics and Development*, p.p.166-171.

<sup>15</sup> This lack of credibility was the result of rumours of immense corruption, entrenching the ranks and leadership of the movement. As Asad Abu Khalil points out, "especially after 1973, the oil-rich Arab governments, the so-called 'reactionary' and the so-called 'progressive' alike, sought to buy influence within the PLO through generous financial donations. The flow of oil money reached, and eventually corrupted, the most revolutionary of Arab leftist parties present in Lebanon. The wealth of the PLO

Amal's establishment as the main sectarian organisation and an important political player. The National Movement in fact, as a wide organisation, lacking a coherent program and a cohesive organisational structure, failed to co-ordinate the differing political philosophies of its members.<sup>16</sup> Also, left-wing parties emerged from the 1975-76 war, losing the majority of their militias.

With the rise of Nabih Birri to the leadership of Amal, in 1980, the movement was detached from the past religious discourse of Musa al-Sadr. Birri represented a political form of leadership, secularising the profile of the movement. Coming from the military wing of the movement, Birri used the military power he had gained within the militia so as to undermine the authority of the established political figures within Amal.<sup>17</sup> In order to advance the infiltration of Amal to the strategic position of the south, Birri led the movement to an open military confrontation with the Palestinian-Progressive forces. Moreover, he set out new policy objectives for the movement, military supremacy in the south and reconstruction of the Lebanese State within which the Shi'i community could achieve a stronger representation. Hence, the presence of the Palestinian Resistance Movement was regarded as an obstacle to the effective realisation of this policy. Between 1980 and 1982, when heavy military confrontations between Amal and parts of the PRM/LNM grew in seriousness, Fatah was dragged into heavy fighting with Amal. Gaining in military strength, Amal sought to close PRM access to parts of the south, inducing the widespread Palestinian reaction. The extensive use of heavy artillery by Fatah and the serious damage this caused to Amal's positions intensified Shi'i hostility against the Palestinians.

Nonetheless, in the aftermath of the second Israeli invasion, in 1982, Amal eventually filled the vacuum that emerged out of the PLO expulsion from the south. With the participation of Birri in the National Salvation Committee,<sup>18</sup> the movement emerged as a prominent political

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organizations initiated a bureaucratisation of the organizations of both the LNM and the Palestinian resistance movement. It became customary for organizations, especially Fateh and the Arab Liberation Front, to raise the salary of members and fighters very frequently to attract a larger membership." Asad Abu Khalil, "The Palestinian-Shi'ite War in Lebanon: an Examination of its Origins", p. 81.

<sup>16</sup> As has been argued, "it was difficult for the masses to take the PLO and the LNM seriously when their organizations were engaged in frequent battles between themselves for control and hegemony. In the eyes of many residents of West Beirut, these organizations were perceived more as gangs than as ideological parties." Asad Abu Khalil, "The Palestinian-Shi'ite war in Lebanon: an examination of its origins", p. 82.

<sup>17</sup> See, Augustus Richard Norton, "The Origins and Resurgence of Amal", in Martin Kramer, *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution*, p.215.

<sup>18</sup> The National Salvation Committee was established, in Mid-June 1982, to handle the Israeli occupation and siege of Beirut. It was consisted of six members. Along with Birri, Bashir Jumayyil and Walid Junblat were also members.



actor in Lebanon. Consequently, when Amin Jumayyil rose in 1982 to the Presidency, Birri distanced himself from the opposition front and its leaders, Jumblat, Karami and Franjieh. Alternatively, he sought a rapprochement with President Jumayyil. Jumayyil ignored him and deliberately excluded him from the government, underestimating, in this way, Shi'i power in Lebanon. Hence, two years later, when an excuse was found in the killing of a militiaman by the army in the eastern Beirut, Amal fighters, acting supposedly to avenge the incident, overran an army position, leading the army shell the Shi'i suburbs. It was then that Birri challenged the existence of the whole government, demanding its resignation. Indeed, at a subsequent stage, in February 1984, the resignation of the Prime Minister and other members of the government brought it very close to collapse. In addition, the counter-attack of Amal saw the second disintegration of the Army, when most of the soldiers of the sixth Brigade, responsible for the defence of west Beirut, either joined Amal or deserted the Army. After a vigorous fighting between Amal and the rest of the army, there was no doubt that Amal emerged as the main power in control of the western part of Beirut.

Thus, within the context of protracted conflict, bringing the rapid appearance of new actors and issues, there is always an inherent need for renewal as the attitudes, the resources and the population involved change rapidly.<sup>19</sup> In Lebanon, the rapidly changing nature of war and the developments involved induced important changes of authority. The failure of the state to deal with the heavy militarisation of the period rendered its disintegration inevitable. Consequently, the military groups rose to fill the vacuum created by the state collapse, and they became the ultimate agents of the means of coercion. As the case of Amal demonstrated, war in Lebanon created the military organisation, as an alternative to the state. What is more, similarly to the mainstream state-paradigm, through the developments of warfare in Lebanon, Amal established its authority through coercion. Conclusively, it was through its involvement in warfare that it became a powerful player, and it was at that moment that it came out to openly challenge the legitimate authority of the state.

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<sup>19</sup> Peter Wallensteen, "Incompatibility, Militarization, and Conflict Resolution", in Peter Wallensteen, Johan Galtung and Carlos Portales, (eds.), *Global Militarization*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1985, p.230.



### 5.1.2 Military Organisation and the Rise of Internal Challengers

As the war went on in the early eighties, a fragmentation of authority surfaced within the most powerful militias. It was not coincidental that, at the height of their sectarian struggle, these groups faced new groups and organisations 'from within', alternative to the mainstream organisations. Consequently, while the war erupted between the Right and the Left, it was transformed into one between Christians and Muslims; at this stage, war was conducted over the legitimacy of authority within each of these sectarian organisations themselves. In effect, the fighting at that period was transformed into one of control and rule of the respective, either Muslim or Christian, areas.<sup>20</sup>

The rise of alternative organisations, such as Islamic Amal, but most importantly Hizballah, challenged the legitimacy of Amal as a communal organisation. Even though the mainstream argument traces this intra-communal split to the aftermath of the Iranian revolution, there are indications of nascent pro-Iranian elements, existing at the unofficial level from the mid to late sixties;<sup>21</sup> that is, even before the creation of the Shi'i communal movement of the Deprived and its adjacent militia, Amal. The Iranian revolution played a crucial role in the creation of Hizballah but as a catalyst rather of the pre-existing Islamic attachments. With the return to Lebanon of a number of religious leaders from Najaf, one amongst whom was Muhammad Hussein Fadl Allah, the party of *Hizb al-Dawa* was created, in the sixties. Through the party, these religious leaders spread the teachings of the Baqer al-Sadr School. Since then, a dissension of views appeared between the circle of Musa-al Sadr and the circle of *Hizb al-Dawa*. With the establishment of the Supreme Islamic Shi'ite Council, Musa al-Sadr promoted Shi'i demands, however adjusted to the context of Lebanon, without attempting to establish an Islamic form of government. The *Hizb al-Dawa*, though, focused on the promotion of the Muslim ideal of government and acted likewise. With the formation of Amal though, and the rise of Musa al-Sadr's popularity amongst the Shi'ites of Lebanon, *Hizb al-Dawa* was soon to

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<sup>20</sup> On this transformed course of war in Lebanon, see, Thomas L. Friedman, "One Civil War Is Over, Others Fast Multiply", New York Times, May 23, 1982.

<sup>21</sup> Three main currents are distinguished during this period; the Union of Muslim Students, formed in 1966; the Faculty of Sciences linked to Muhammad Husein Fadl Allah, who had just arrived to Lebanon from Najaf; and third *Hizb al-Dawa* Party (Call Party), organised around Baqer al-Sadr, Musa al-Sadr's cousin and a prominent leader of the Shi'i community worldwide. For more information on *al-Dawa*, see The Middle East Reporter, December 24, 1983, "Al Dawa and Other Secret Organizations." See also, Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "Details About "Hizballah" and Its Leaders", The Middle East Reporter, March 22, 1986.

be integrated into the Amal organisation and stayed within the movement up until the Iranian revolution.

The disruptive Palestinian activity and the risks the continuing Israeli attacks inflicted on the southerners, brought the dissension between the mainstream Amal and its Islamist branch; the latter branch was supported by the Iranian revolution. When the split later came into the open, it was at an opportune moment, when the balance of power within the movement changed considerably. As long as Musa al-Sadr was the legitimate and unquestioned leader of the movement, he was the federator of the various groups within the organisation.<sup>22</sup> However, Musa al-Sadr mysteriously disappeared while on a trip to Libya, in 1978. The loss of the unifying leadership of Musa al-Sadr led the different aspirants of leadership into an internal struggle for predominance, weakening in this way the internal solidarity and the viability of the organisation. With the rise of Birri to the leadership, the pro-Iranian groups faced a dilemma, either to align themselves to Birri and thus to the Syrian orbit of influence or to desert the movement.

In the aftermath of the Israeli invasion in 1982, Birri declared his participation in the Committee of National Salvation; the latter committee having being established to anticipate the destructive consequences of the invasion. The participation of Birri in a Committee that was regarded by the 'radicals' within Amal as an instrument of the 'American imperialistic plans' in Lebanon, was sufficient pretext for these splinter groups to leave the movement and create both Hizballah and Islamic Amal. A long period of tension culminated with a definite fragmentation at a point when the majority of the Shi'i population in Lebanon became strongly attached to the Iranian revolution. It was on this changing communal spirit that Iranians relied so as to export and extend their revolution to Lebanon.

Rather than being the sole result of the Iranian revolution, the formation of Hizballah signified the massive effects of external actors on the internal balance of power. The Iranian Revolution and the Israeli invasion are considered as being the main events through which 'external' actors became actively involved in Lebanon and subsequently brought profound

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<sup>22</sup> These groups, functioning within Amal, sought to profit from the increasing popularity of Musa al-Sadr. Even before the disappearance of Musa al-Sadr, with the help of the Iranians, the Islamist branch of Amal gained some influence at a period when Musa al-Sadr was considered to have undermined the Iranian influence. Hence, at that stage, Iran attempted to mobilise the pro-Iranian elements within Amal; these came to attract followers through the use of the Islamic ideology with Iranian help. It was at a later stage though that this process of fragmentation became complete.

changes in the domestic political scene.<sup>23</sup> With the establishment of the Islamic Republic, Iranian involvement became even more capable of exploiting an already existing, but not yet manifested, internal tension at the level of communal leadership. The immense impact of the Israeli invasion on the domestic political scene accelerated the pace of the communal break up and gave Hizballah the chance to get openly involved in the war. Consequently, in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion, the detachment of the pro-Iranian elements from the activities and the organisation of Amal became complete. In the period between 1982 and 1985, when the actual existence of Hizballah was for the first time disclosed, the organisation launched a mobilisation of military resources, with more active Iranian involvement. Under the supervision of the 'Revolutionary Iranian Guards' (the so-called *Pasdaran*),<sup>24</sup> the party began to organise militarily in the Bekaa. Moreover, a more concrete organisational framework was established with the formation of the Consultative Council, as the main agent of leadership within the organisation, partly funded by Lebanese and partly by Iranian contributions.

The rise of Hizballah as an organised group, alternative to the mainstream communal group of Amal, posed a serious challenge to Amal's legitimacy as a representative Shi'i organisation, changing both the intra-communal balance of power and the logic of communal authority itself. Hence, Hizballah and its close association with Iran indicated a rival communal organisation and not a negligible one. As the emergence of Hizballah raised the urgent issue of defence and survival for Amal, the Syrian help became all the more crucial for Amal's sustenance. In its attempt to gain access to the south of Lebanon so as to control the Palestinians, Syria had previously established close links with Amal. The Syrian connection with Amal was established at a stage when Amal had already infiltrated into the South and had been transformed into a considerable power there. Syrian involvement with Amal became apparent in the Amal-led siege of western Beirut and the attack on the Palestinian refugee camps, in

<sup>23</sup> R. K. Ramazani points to the linkage of the Israeli invasion with the Iranian Revolution, in that with the fall of the pro-American regime of the *Shah* in Iran, considered together with Israel as the main pillars of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, the U.S. was left with Israel as its main ally in the region. Consequently, the Israeli decision to invade Lebanon, at the period of the anti-American Khomeini regime was considered to have been without serious implications for the American-Israeli relations. R. K. Ramazani, Chapter 12: "The Islamization of Lebanon?", in *Revolutionary Iran: Challenge and Response in the Middle East*, p.p. 181-182.

<sup>24</sup> 'The Revolutionary Iranian Guards' was an important tool of Iranian foreign policy in Lebanon. They arrived in Lebanon and settled in the Bekaa, in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion. The unit represented a paramilitary corps within the Iranian military hierarchy and a vigorous propagator of the Khomeini ideology. As R. K. Ramazani points out "In contrast to the regular Iranian armed forces, the Revolutionary Guards are considered to be the *Jondollah* (army of God) and represent deep ideological commitment rather than military competence." R. K. Ramazani, Chapter 12: "The Islamization of Lebanon?", in *Revolutionary Iran: Challenge and Response in the Middle East*, p.184.

1984 and 1985 respectively. Having established a close connection with the Iranian Revolution<sup>25</sup>, Syria was not willing to sacrifice any deterioration in that relation. In effect, as Syria struggled to keep both the Iranian ally and its policy objectives within the Lebanese ground intact, it kept both Shi'i organisations in a continuous conflict with each other, from which it could benefit. On the other hand, in an effort to enhance its own influence within Lebanon, Iran promoted its ally, Hizballah, so as to counterbalance what was regarded as a moderate leader and his movement, Nabih Birri and Amal respectively. This objective became even more urgent when Amal seemed to have gained ground out of the fighting with the Palestinians. The eruption of open confrontation between Amal and Hizballah, in 1988, revealed the extent of Syrian determination and influence in Lebanon.<sup>26</sup> What became revealed throughout the fighting was that, *"the clashes... brought home to HizbAllah the fact that Damascus was the ultimate authority in Lebanon and that its survival and political continuity depended upon Syria's approval. If HizbAllah had harboured notions of replacing Amal it was forced to realise that the secular movement was Syria's aim in Lebanon."*<sup>27</sup> As Syria was found off balance, the only solution, beneficial to the Syrian interests, was a peace truce between both the conflicting factions. The end of hostilities was made possible through a truce, not accidentally decided and negotiated in Damascus and Tehran, in 1990.

Consequently, the intra-communal conflict was the product of important changes in the logic of warfare. From warfare between Muslims and Christians, at this stage, the war was transformed into one over which Muslims or which Christians would have the legitimate authority to act as communal representatives. As, in the established state-paradigm, the emergence of potential rivals led the states to the extraction of as many coercive capabilities as possible, the rise of rivals to challenge the authority of the organisation would lead it to the same struggle for power. The difference is that as the established state drew clear boundaries

<sup>25</sup> The Syrian-Iranian alliance could be attributed to the hostile relations between the *Shah* and Syria, as well as the hostility between Syria and Iraq, at the period of the Iran-Iraq war. This axis was reinforced due to the common internal and external objectives of both Iran and Syria, and their common perspective vis-à-vis the Israel and the U.S., regarded as common enemies. The Iraqi invasion of Iran led to the formalisation of this alliance with the signing, in March 1982, of a ten-year economic agreement. For more information on the Iranian-Syrian alliance, see, R. K. Ramazani, chapter 12, "The Islamization of Lebanon?", in *Revolutionary Iran: Challenge and Response in the Middle East*, p.p. 176-178.

<sup>26</sup> The Amal-Hizballah war erupted in early 1988, when Amal led a defensive attack against Hizballah's position around Nabatiyya; Hizballah reacted by challenging Amal's position in the southern suburbs of Beirut. Hizballah's main objective was to overrun Amal's position in the southern suburbs so as infiltrate itself in the south of Lebanon. It attacked, without warning; it fulfilled its objectives with both Iranian and Palestinian help within three days, limiting Amal's position to the northern quarters of Ghubairi and Shiyya.

<sup>27</sup> Hala Jaber, *Born with a Vengeance*, p.35.

between the 'external' and 'internal' domains, the military organisations in Lebanon acted to the contrary. In the case of Hizballah, the particular external circumstances out of which the movement was created reflected the same external logic of state formation in Lebanon. Nevertheless the emergence of Hizballah, as a powerful political actor, demanding legitimate authority, reflects the same logic of state building, attached to the extraction of resources for the establishment of legitimacy. Within this context, Hizballah gained legitimacy through the Iranian provision of resources for the conduct of war. At a subsequent stage, the sort of challenge Hizballah posed to Amal and their overt struggle could refer to the same 'security dilemma' that the state has to face vis-à-vis its rivals. In essence, just like states are preoccupied with the provision of their defence, groups within a given state are compelled to provide for their own security, especially under the threat they may face from other groups. When groups take steps to defend themselves, they pose a threat to the security of others and they subsequently lead other groups to take steps that will diminish the security of the first group.<sup>28</sup>

### *5.1.3 Military Organisation and Internal political structures: a Different Version of Extraction, Protection and Adjudication*

In their attempt to establish their own authority through force, the militias created their own enclaves, within which their co-religionists were integrated. With a series of attacks against the left, the Palestinians and the Lebanese Army, Amal emerged as the main Shi'i communal organisation to re-arrange Shi'i territorial boundaries. Under the pressure of warfare, Shi'ites closely identified with the south of Lebanon and the southern suburbs of Beirut. In addition, the northern Bekaa became a homogeneous Shi'i area due to its role as a refuge for the Shi'ites of Beirut's southern suburbs in times of great stress. The largest Shi'i influx into the southern suburbs of Beirut occurred in the aftermath of the 1975-76 war. Large numbers of Shi'ites<sup>29</sup> were forced out of their homes, in what later came to be known as Christian controlled east Beirut, and found refuge in the southern part of the city. Many other Shi'ites were forced to

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<sup>28</sup> M. E. Brown, *The International Dimension of Internal Conflict*, U.S.: The MIT Press, 1996, p.p. 14-15.

<sup>29</sup> For more details on the forced Shi'i migrations, see, *The Middle East Reporter*, November 26, 1983 "How Militant Is the 'Poverty Belt' Around Beirut?".



leave their homes in the area of the Palestinian refugee camps, when these fell into Christian rightist hands in 1976.<sup>30</sup>

As the war went on for years, the forced migrations of the population rapidly disrupted the confessional distribution of civil service posts. The displacement of a great number of people from areas in which the civil service posts were previously distributed on a proportional basis, according to the size of sect, increased the number of vacant posts. In view of the disintegrated state apparatus, the various militias rose to deal with the issue of public services.<sup>31</sup>

Through 'cantonisation' the various militias resumed authority within their respective enclaves. Even though most of them had already monopolised the means of coercion and had achieved a considerable military success, no militias had reached a military preponderance over the rest. However, this fact gave way to the continuation of the warfare and the further legitimisation of the illicit military authority. By standing on their own right, functioning with their own independent sources of revenue, and establishing, ironically enough, some form of administration, the militant groups seemed like the formal institutions of the state itself. Through the resumption of the state's function as the main collector of revenues,<sup>32</sup> the militias gained unprecedented strength and legitimacy. In an effort to counter the downfall of the economy, the state initiated harsh policies. However, the ongoing economic crisis served as a way in which the militias not only strengthened their own position out of the state's loss, but also rationalised their own struggle in the eyes of their respective communities.<sup>33</sup> Hence, the various militias were not willing to allow the channelling of any authority or revenues to the state's benefit; in such a case they would have to face the danger of legitimising state authority and de-legitimising their own.

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<sup>30</sup> Through their respective military organisation, the Kata'eb, the Maronites likewise were united to safeguard their territories in eastern Beirut and Mount Lebanon; the threat coming from the Phalanges forged similar bonds of solidarity amongst the Druzes of the Shuf.

<sup>31</sup> See Judith Harik, *The Public and Social Services of the Lebanese Militias*, Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, September 1994, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> As Elizabeth Picard points out "from the very first few months of the war, militia groups waged urban battles over the economic activity on which Lebanon's prosperity had been based: the banking industry at the heart of Beirut, the customs' inspection at the city's port and airport, the electric-power stations, the telephone system, the oil refineries, the main communication routes, as well as the new industrial zones surrounding the capital.... This predatory system was based on a co-operative/competitive relation among the different militia-not unlike that between Mafia "families"-as well as on their shared opposition to everything that promised to bring back a legal system." Elizabeth Picard, "Science Politique, Orientalisme et Sociologie au Chevet du Liban". *Revue Francaise de Science Politique*, August 1997, p. 214.

<sup>33</sup> On these functions of the militias, see Theodor Hanf, *Co-existence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, p.p. 359-360.

Shi'i military organisations built up a whole network of services, offering protection to the Shi'i population and in return drawing compliance so as to act as the overarching legitimate authority. At the outset of war, Amal was both politically and militarily weak. It did not have the power to gain a unified control over territory or gain access to substantial public resources. After the two massive Israeli invasions and the daily Palestinian activity in the south had displaced a great number of Shi'i villagers, the need for material and military protection of these populations became urgent. By the early eighties, Amal had become a dominant actor in the southern suburbs, leading the Maronite residents to flee across the Green Line into the Christian territory. The take-over of west Beirut by Amal, in 1984, rendered the movement even more powerful player. In the period between 1980 and 1984, Amal launched the building up of its public service networks, which placed the movement as the main socio-economic distributor amongst the war-stricken Shi'i population. In 1980, the Council of the South was separated from the Ministry of Social Affairs and gained an independent status to deal with welfare and reconstruction programmes in the south. The considerable financial independence of the council increased Amal's access to the immense administrative powers of the council. The funds the movement extracted from the council facilitated the immediate distribution by Amal of a great deal of public services to the south.<sup>34</sup> In the aftermath of the seizure of Western Beirut, in 1984, Amal's powerful role became recognised at the national level with the establishment of the Ministry of the South led by Nabih Birri. Soon enough, the newly founded ministry became the main agent of funds and services, with Birri as a more or less direct linkage between the Ministry and Amal, confirming the prevalent argument that held the south as Amal's stronghold.<sup>35</sup>

In addition, Amal's prestige rose during this period, as it became clear that it could influence a great many public projects of social assistance at no expense to the movement. Its lack of coherent administrative structure rendered Amal inflexible in providing the main services to

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<sup>34</sup> As Judith Harik Palmer points out, during this period the Council of the South, "was involved in the repair of roads, schools, houses, the construction of hospitals such as the one at Nabatiya, and social assistance for needy families. Medical care for resistance fighters and southern and western Bekaa residents was arranged by a contract with the American University in Beirut through which the Council guaranteed payment for treatment of patients sent to the capital from the South. The Council was also charged with the replacement of hundreds of Christian teachers who had left the region." Judith Harik, *The Public and Social Services of the Lebanese Militias*, p. 20.

<sup>35</sup> As has been pointed out, "a number of large projects which normally would have come under the aegis of various governmental ministries were handled by the new ministry. They included the extensive repair of Litani River bridges at Kasmiya that had been damaged by an Israeli raid, and other large public works. There is no doubt that the substantial funds available and the resulting public works and assistance programmes were a windfall for Berri's communal and national stature." Judith Harik, *The Public and Social Services of the Lebanese Militias*, p. 21.

the Shi'i residents of the southern suburbs; hence, the movement became a lot less focused on the southern suburbs of Beirut. In an effort to prevent the fleeing of the Shi'i residents from the south between 1984 and 1990, the south of Lebanon became the main focus of Amal's social assistance, as a means for effective resistance. The maintenance of the south as a homogeneous Shi'i area would further strengthen the strategic position of the movement in the area. It was during most of the elections that the majority of the Shi'ites of the southern suburbs travelled to their respective native villages, either in the south or the Bekaa, to vote. Consequently, the ministry provided more funds for these areas, rather than the southern suburbs, for which there was no government action in sight from which Amal could profit. Thus, the considerable financial feedback from the governmental spoils would render Amal's focus on both these areas, the south and the Bekaa, more profitable.

In the case of Hizballah, a broad network of services was constructed with Iranian help. The movement proved organisationally quite competent in dealing with the provision of the basic resources. Through the establishment of a number of specialised committees, dealing with financial, social and economic issues of war, but most importantly through the funds the movement extracted from Iran,<sup>36</sup> it could provide a regular payment for full time members. The organisation could partly relied on donations raised in Lebanon; however, when extra funds were needed, Iran proved more than willing to pay its contribution to the Islamic activity in Lebanon.<sup>37</sup> Through the Islamic Republic's Higher Defence Council, organisational and administrative orders and funding were provided for Hizballah. Moreover, the Consultative Council was created, sponsored by Iran in order to check up on Hizballah's work in Lebanon. In addition, a wide financial and military network became established. Through this network, *"not only are operating expenses provided, but there is also an extensive system for the payment of pensions to the families of individuals martyred in the cause of Hizb Allah"*<sup>38</sup> The Financial Aid Committee financially supported the dependants of those killed or wounded in the anti-Israeli struggle. This committee was closely co-operated with the Martyrs' Foundation.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, the *Imam Khomeini Assistance Committee* was formed in Beirut, in 1982, with branches in strategic areas such as Tyre, Sidon and Ba'albek. This Committee

<sup>36</sup> Hizballah was benefited by the monthly financial assistance from Iran of roughly \$7 million U.S. See Elizabeth Picard, "Science Politique, Orientalisme et Sociologie au Chevet du Liban", p. 214.

<sup>37</sup> For more details on Iran's financial contribution to Hizballah, see, The Middle East Reporter, March 19, 1986, "Iran's Revolution Provides "HizbAllah's" Strength."

<sup>38</sup> Augustus Richard Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon*, p. 102.

<sup>39</sup> See Nizar Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation", p. 327.

granted scholarships and interest free loans. To these organisations, the Islamic Health Organisation and the Reconstruction Campaign were added, founded by Hizballah in 1984 and 1988 respectively, the latter devoted to the implementation of heavy construction projects.<sup>40</sup>

In organisational terms, Hizballah established a set of separate organs, supervised by the politburo. These organs were to implement the indoctrination of young Shi'ites to the cause of the movement (The Enforcement Recruitment and Propaganda Organ); to provide support to members, new recruits and supporters of Hizballah (Holy Reconstruction Organ), security and protection to the party leaders and members (Security Organ); and to co-ordinate the Islamic Resistance and Islamic Holy War (Combat Organ).<sup>41</sup> In addition to these organs there was the Executive Committee. This Committee constituted of several regional councils which covered the main Shi'i districts of Beirut, the southern suburbs, the south of Lebanon and the Bekaa. Each of these regional councils was directly linked to the Supreme *Shura* Council, through one of its members; the main responsibility of these councils was, and still is, to check the activities and daily needs of their respective districts.<sup>42</sup>

Consequently, throughout the war in Lebanon, the various military organisations extracted the necessary resources for the conduct of war. In the absence of state authority, the militias created their own 'buffer zones' within the boundaries of which they exerted control in exchange for protection and security. Through the extraction of resources, they created a broad popular basis out of the public services they provided for the population. In this way, they further legitimised their own position within warfare. They built a broad network of structures, in their attempt to carry out their policy objectives. The logic of bargaining wove the relationship between the established state and its citizens, with the exchange of socio-economic rewards and rights for the drawing of compliance. Along similar lines, the military organisations predominated as the ultimate authorities and further de-legitimised state authority itself.

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<sup>40</sup> For more details on the public services of Hizballah, see, Judith Harik, *The Public and Social Services of the Lebanese Militias*, p.p. 23-31.

<sup>41</sup> For more details on these organs of Hizballah, see Nizar Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizballah: from Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation", p.p.325-329.

<sup>42</sup> Nizar Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizballah: from Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation", p. 327.

## 5.2. Re-creation of Shi'i Identity through Warfare

### 5.2.1 Construction of New Communal Boundaries out of Warfare

The course of war events soon eliminated the previous class mobilisation of the Shi'i population as sectarian affiliations dominated over the previous class allegiances. This could be very well demonstrated in the case of the Shi'i community. The collective politicisation of the Shi'ites led to their identification with the socialist and Marxist groups, less on the basis of ideology and programme, but rather on the basis of the solutions these groups provided to their problems. In the early seventies, these groups gained access to the Shi'i peasantry and sub-proletariat. When the situation in the south became fairly de-stabilised, due to the Israeli raids, the Shi'ites relied even more on the protection of the Palestinian commandos and the leftist groups. The Shi'i impoverished population became the main recruits of the local defence militias that the Communist groups had established. At this stage, the Shi'ites identified with the broader issues that the left had put forward; they came to denounce the Israelis, the Maronites and their local *zua'ma* as their enemies. Consequently, as the leftist groups became attached even more closely to the Palestinians and extended their popular base predominantly amongst the Muslim population, both the Sunni but most importantly the Shi'ites, a wider militant determination to change the status quo was stirred. Nevertheless, these developments did not lead to the elimination of Shi'i sectarian identification. It was just that both the migrant and peasant Shi'i population attached themselves to these groups as a means to address their collective grievances and their opposition to the practices of the state; thus they opted for a more radical approach rather than anything else.<sup>43</sup>

At a later stage, civil war revealed the predominance of the politico-confessional consciousness, "*constantly sustained by the fact that the Other across the green line consistently defined himself as Christian.*"<sup>44</sup> Consequently, at this stage, Shi'i mobilisation by the left was replaced by the predominance of a sectarian identification with the communal organisation of Amal. Hence, as the war went on, the leftist parties were trapped in their own short-sighted vision of Lebanese reality. They failed to realise, in time, the duplicity of the

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<sup>43</sup> On the Shi'i identification with the LNM, see Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut: The Sunni Muslim Community and the Lebanese State 1840 - 1985*, p.p. 172-174, 184.

<sup>44</sup> Ghassane Salamé, *Lebanon's Injured Identities Who Represents Whom during a Civil War?*, Papers on Lebanon, no. 2, August 1986, Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, p. 12.



system itself, the existing overlapping between confessional and class identities, as well as the complicated nature of confessionalism. When they realised that, it was too late as war had already stimulated the communal identifications of the population.

Amal rose to capitalise on the already existing Shi'i disenchantment with the political conduct of both the PLO and the LNM. Since 1978, the Shi'ites in the south had had to face the increasing Israeli offensive strategy and were daily reminded of the Palestinians as the source of their misfortunes. In effect, a serious split was opened with the past, when the Shi'ites, moving around the Palestinian camps in the early 1970s, had many things to share with the Palestinians; then they "*shared common enemies Israel, Rightist militias, and a common situation of poverty and oppression. In addition there were shared cultural elements: Islam, Arabism and the radical/populist ideas which characterised that period.*"<sup>45</sup> Since the late 1970s by contrast, rather than blaming the Israelis for their plight, the Shi'i villagers displaced their own feelings of hostility and frustration, deriving from various sources, on to the Palestinians, who were visible at that time and thus held as a 'rational' substitute.

The popularity of the Palestinians amongst the Shi'i populations was rapidly deteriorating to the level that the southern Lebanese blamed the PLO in particular, as being primarily responsible for all their misfortunes and hardship. Through its propagandistic programme, Amal acted to fill and extend the ideological gap, created by this anti-Palestinian spirit. On the eve of Amal's attack against the Palestinian camps,<sup>46</sup> Amal militiamen instigated Shi'ite anger against the Palestinians so as to find support for the forthcoming events. Recollection of the past ills and hardship of the Shi'ites out of Palestinian activity, that induced the successive Israeli retaliatory measures, was used in order to stir dormant resentments and fears. During this period, the speeches delivered by Amal officials underlined the determination of the movement to put an end to the suffering inflicted by the 'unrestrained' Palestinian activity in the south.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Rosemary Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 221.

<sup>46</sup> Amal led a siege of the Palestinian camps of Beirut, in May-June 1985. For more information on the Battle of the Camps, see Camille Mansour "Au-delà du Siège des Camps Palestiniens de Beyrouth: la Montée en Puissance du Mouvement Amal et ses Limites", in *Maghreb-Machrek*, no.109, July-September 1985.

<sup>47</sup> An example of this sort of strategy is demonstrated in the Press conference Nabih Birri held on the 21 May, 1985 in which he stated the following; "The battle unfolded yesterday was a battle aiming at the entering of the Palestinians in the theatre of the south. We clearly say that we will not permit this. ..., we are disposed to help the ones who want to fight, but from now on, we will not let through those who want to bargain over the back of our people and we'll fight to the last inhabitant of the South." Translated extract, taken from *Maghreb-Machrek*, July-September 1985, no. 109, p. 85.

This campaign was highly effective when Amal resumed the control of West Beirut. By becoming the first group addressing the Shi'ites, Amal elevated Shi'i sectarian consciousness to become the primary goal and *raison d'être* of the movement itself. Moreover, Amal's success in mobilising the Shi'i population could be situated in the changing nature of war. The transformation of war from a war between Left and Right to one led by Muslims against Christians brought the Lebanese people back to their sectarian identifications. Within this context, the Shi'ites had to face the daily attacks of Israel, which culminated in the massive Israeli invasion in 1978, taking a high toll of mainly Shi'i lives.<sup>48</sup> In the aftermath of the massive Israeli Operation Litani, Amal was more than willing to provide for the imminent defence needs of the Shi'i population of the south. Living within a dangerous environment, in between the daily disruptive Israeli and Palestinian activities, the villagers of the south identified with Amal as a way out of their mounting defence and socio-economic problems. Through the provision for the pending needs of the inhabitants of the south, new horizons were opened for the establishment of Amal's power in the south of Lebanon.

In an effort to counteract the different sorts of problems they faced, diverse Shi'i social categories adhered to Amal: the wealthy immigrants who were not satisfied with either the progressive parties or the traditional notables; the traditional families of the local *zu'ama*, left without substantial military power, sensing their reign slipping away, as they lost the audience of their protégés; the numerically important middle classes, always looking for the most favourable affiliation; and the disinherited families always found in a precarious situation. By the end of the seventies, political power was transferred from the traditional local leadership to the new militant elites. In their attempt to keep a part of their local audience and to ensure their personal protection in view of the continuing warfare, the traditional notables granted their

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<sup>48</sup> Israeli invasion came as retaliation for the Palestinian raid on a bus on the road from Haifa to Tel Aviv, killing a large number of Israelis and wounding a lot more. The existing situation in Lebanon rendered the invasion inevitable. First, the vacuum in the south was a challenge for Israel. The disenchantment of many Lebanese with Syria and the Palestinians created a balance quite favourable for Israel. The huge number of victims clearly demonstrates the extent of the invasion; 180 Lebanese civilians were buried by army morticians; an estimate of 100 more lay under the rubble or were buried by relatives, the total number of civilians killed was more than 2000, most of whom were Lebanese; an unknown number from stampede, from exposure, malnutrition, or shock; the number of new Lebanese refugees was over 250,000; 2500 houses were completely destroyed, 5200 partly damaged in the overwhelmingly Shi'i area south of the Litani. The invasion led to the deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in the south of Lebanon and the setting of the Palestinian cause at the centre of the political agenda, leading to a re-polarisation of the country between two different attitudes; the first denounced the invasion and accepted UNIFIL's intervention, as long as it could lead to the withdrawal of the Israeli forces. The second attitude regarded invasion as the direct result of the Palestinian activities. See, W.Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East*, p.128.

financial contribution to the Shi'i militia.<sup>49</sup> By the early 1980s, Amal was rapidly gaining members and supporters, as it actively demonstrated its determination to defend the community.<sup>50</sup>

In the period between 1978 and 1979, two other factors further activated Shi'i identification with Amal; first, the mysterious disappearance of Amal's leader, Musa al-Sadr, while on a trip to Libya. Ironically enough, the disappearance of Musa al-Sadr increased the popularity of both the leader and the movement he created. The great appeal this event had for the Shi'i sectarian identifications was reinforced, at a subsequent stage, in 1979, with the Iranian revolution. Both these developments were very much intertwined, in the sense that throughout most the time he spent in Lebanon, Musa al-Sadr was regarded as a bridge between the Shi'i community of Lebanon and their co-religionists in Iran. Consequently, both his disappearance and the triumph of a Shi'i form of government in Iran could do no more than activate the Shi'i sectarian affiliations.

Moreover, the overload of misery that the Israeli invasion inflicted on the population, especially in the south, and the great appeal of the Iranian revolution radicalised a large segment of the Shi'i population. Having immensely suffered from the Israeli invasion, this Shi'i population gained great strength from the Iranian model; this instilled an intense revolutionary spirit in their anti-Israeli struggle. This spirit was channelled in Hizballah as, in the period between 1984 and 1985, the Hizballah-led Islamic Resistance emerged as a formidable force against Israel. The offensive strategy of Hizballah burnished its image and its appeal, especially when Israel was forced to withdraw into the self-proclaimed security zone it had occupied since 1978. The effectiveness of the Islamic Resistance led a mass Shi'i constituency to identify with the movement. Soon enough, Hizballah became a prominent political player and a potent rival of Amal, in the struggle for communal leadership. Moreover, the tight organisation of Hizballah rendered the movement far more efficient than Amal in providing for the Shi'i population. This fact became apparent in the aftermath of the Amal-Hizballah war, in 1989, when the Christian forces backed by part of the Lebanese Army,

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<sup>49</sup> On these changes in terms of leadership, see Souha Taraf-Najib, *Zrariye, Village Chiite du Liban-Sud: de 1900 à nos jours*, p.p.99-113.

<sup>50</sup> On the impact of these developments and the resurrection of Amal, see the following; Talal Jaber, "Le Discourse Shi'ite sur le Pouvoir"; Rosemary Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, chapter 7; Augustus Richard Norton, "Changing Actors and Leadership among the Shi'ites of Lebanon", Augustus Richard Norton, "The Origins and Resurgence of Amal", in Martin Kramer *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution*; Samir Kassir, "L'affirmation des Chiites Libanais"; John Yemma, "Lebanon's Shiite Muslims Flex their Military Muscles."

bombarded the southern suburbs; as urgent action was needed, Hizballah's firmly organised and well-funded public services were the first to provide immediate assistance.<sup>51</sup>

At another level, for those identified with Hizballah, a different sense of identity was constructed, closely linked to the organisational and ideological principles of the movement. Membership of Hizballah is not an easy task, as most of the emphasis is given to the organisational principles of ideology and discipline. The process of membership is divided into two stages; in the first stage, the potential member has to pass through the stage of 'mobilisation' (*al-Tabia*). This stage can last for more than a year, during which the individual is 'educated' in the principles of the movement and is observed in his conduct. In the second stage, actual membership is granted, as well as the full responsibilities incurred by a member.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, within the organisation, the importance of religion is crucial. Hizballah requires from its members, strict obedience in their religious behaviour. Hizballah has an organised system of religious principles and criteria. In contrast to Hizballah, Amal has a political agenda, as it does not require any conditions of membership, nor does it have any cultural criteria.<sup>53</sup>

Consequently, the changing warfare alliances, attitudes and issues shaped and reshaped the existing identities. First, continuity with the pre-war State of Lebanon was maintained, in the sense that throughout the warfare in Lebanon, Shi'i identity continued to affirm itself in terms of overlapping allegiances, old and new. Less than erase one another these allegiances went on co-exist, some of them rapidly changing and some others still maintained. Second, in other historical and political contexts the established state was the main enforcer of identities amongst the citizens. In similar ways, the military organisations in warfare Lebanon were elevated to the status of the main authorities, drawing and redrawing communal boundaries, according to the convenience of their temporal alliances, frictions and organisational balance of power. Nevertheless, the sense of 'legitimate' authority, impinged on both paradigms, as those who hold power, either the state or the militia, are in effect, the ones with the premium authority to draw identity boundaries.

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<sup>51</sup> See Judith Palmer Harik, "Between Islam and the System: Sources and Implications of Popular Support For Lebanon's Hizballah", in *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol.40, no.1, March 1996, p. 45.

<sup>52</sup> See, Marius Deeb, "Shia Movements in Lebanon: their Formation, Ideology, Social Basis, and Links with Iran and Syria", pp.683-698.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Ali Fayyad, Director of the HizbAllahi Consulting Centre for Studies and Documentation, 8/4/2000.



### 5.2.2 Re-creation of Communal Myths and Symbols through Warfare

Through the changing nature of warfare, Shi'i myths and symbols were reconstructed so as to adjust to the changing attitudes of the main political actors. In an effort to bridge the differences between the various communal groups and the issues involved, during the first years of war, Musa al-Sadr adopted conciliatory activities. Hence, he chose to abandon the increasingly military action of the prior period. His several initiatives in collaboration with the Christian religious leaders, and the hunger strike he announced in 1975, demonstrated his strong opposition to war. Without ignoring the confessional system as a source of misfortune in Lebanon, in the several speeches he gave during this period he vigorously focused on the social issues; in his view, these have predominated over confessionalism and were the main source of the continuing crisis in Lebanon.

A new interpretation of communal myths and symbols was shaped out of the invention of a new imaginative figure, which replaced the revolutionary figure of *Imam* Husein and the paradigm of Kerbala; the paradigm of the son of Husein, the fourth *Imam* Zayn al-Abidin, was reconstructed during this period. In essence, the fourth *Imam*, who had escaped death at Kerbala, in the aftermath of the battle of Kerbala withdrew from revolutionary action and he lived in peace ever after. As Musa al-Sadr explained, this example did not signify any sort of cowardice; on the contrary, by accepting life, under the rule of an unjust government, and despite the painful loss of his family, *Imam* Zayn al-Abidin kept the cause of Ali partisans alive. He continued to pursue their struggle, in another way and on another terrain.

At a later stage, on his disappearance, Musa al-Sadr had become a legend himself. By the event of his disappearance, the Shi'i religious conscience had been stirred so much that a whole new perception was constructed; as if the Shi'ites had entered the phase of '*ghayba*', the Occultation. Musa al-Sadr was associated with the persona of the twelfth *Imam*, re-activating the expectation that the 'Hidden *Imam*', the 'disappeared Imam', would return. The appeal of both the loss of the communal leader and the subsequent success of the Shi'i cause with the Iranian revolution was demonstrated in the annual anniversary of the battle of Kerbala, the *Ashura*, in 1978. In this *Ashura* celebration, a large procession of almost six thousand persons passed the streets of western Beirut, through the places where the Shi'i immigrants were settled, such as Ghabayri and Bourj al-Barajnieh. The same procession extended up to the



demarcation line with eastern Beirut; key participants in the procession were the mass of Shi'i war-refugees, displaying the portraits of both Khomaii and Musa al-Sadr.<sup>54</sup>

In this way, the Shi'ites in Lebanon vowed allegiance to the revolutionary heritage of both Musa al-Sadr and Khomeini. Moreover, the reinterpretation of religious myths and symbols within the different contexts, the Iranian and the Lebanese was profoundly transformed through the renewed meaning of *Ashura*. The latter became detached from a plain historical event and attached to "*an activistic, belligerent, rebellious approach in which the medieval politicoreligious myth has preserved its form but changed some of its content.*"<sup>55</sup> Thus, Musa al-Sadr was the one to reform the content of *Ashura*, urging his followers to disassociate themselves from the passive and submissive symbolism of the past. In similar ways, Khomeini himself was the one to render *Ashura* the milestone of the Iranian Revolution. The Iranian celebration of *Ashura*, in 1963, was the basis of the massive protest movements against the *Shah's* policies, heralding the revolution; or, in 1978, the organised and revolutionary spirit of the *Ashura* dragged hundreds of thousands of protesters in open demonstration against the *Shah*. During the revolutionary period in Iran, *Ashura* became the main vehicle of the Khomeinist revolutionary ideology and it attracted a massive following. In the *Ashura* celebration, on the eve of the Revolution, the victims of the *Shah's* repressive measures personified Husein and his sacrifice in the face of the 'Pahlavi tyranny'. In this way Khomeinist ideology was the meeting point between tradition and revolution, whereas "*continuity and change were thus blended smoothly in order to mobilize the masses.*"<sup>56</sup>

This revolutionary spirit was transferred to the Shi'ites of Lebanon in 1982, when the Israeli invasion brought a new dimension to the annual celebration of the *Ashura* that year. Due to the limited access to the Shi'i territory of Jabal Amil because of the Israeli occupation, *Ashura* was celebrated in the southern suburbs of Beirut, taking the form of resistance against the foreign invader. Commencing from the traditional Shi'i areas, a procession was directed at Khald; it was there that the Shi'i militias had paid the heavy price of the anti-Israeli struggle with their lives. The following year, the celebration was transferred to the south, at Nabatiyya. The heavy climate of the period brought about a major transformation in the performance of *Ashura*; due to the strict censorship imposed by the occupation forces, the recital was transmitted by word

<sup>54</sup> For more details on the celebration of *Ashura* during this period, see Yves Gonzalez-Quijano, "Les Interpretations d'un Rite: Célébrations de la 'Achoura au Liban'", p.p. 13-16.

<sup>55</sup> Emmanuel Sivan, "Sunni Radicalism in the Middle East and the Iranian Revolution", in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 21, 1989, p. 17.

<sup>56</sup> Emmanuel Sivan, "Sunni Radicalism in the Middle East and the Iranian Revolution", p. 17.

of mouth.<sup>57</sup> Shi'i hostility against Israel took un-precedented dimensions during the commemoration of *Ashura* in the same year, when an Israeli convoy attempted to make its way through the mass of sixty thousand mourners in Nabatiyya. Regarding the event as a major blunder, the Shi'i mourners turned their hostility against the Israelis by throwing stones and overturning the Israeli trucks. As the Israelis began firing, at least two Shi'ites were killed and several others were wounded.

This incident marked a serious difference in the interpretation of Shi'i symbolism. The actual occurrence of the incident in the most important Shi'i centre of the south, Nabatiyya, reconstructed the Shi'i identification with the south as the historic Shi'i 'homeland'. The local Shi'i population perceived the arbitrary and uncontrolled presence of a foreign army in the south as a major threat. In fact, they were tired of bearing the heavy toll in blood and disillusionment; the usurpation of their land was viewed as a usurpation of their own self-respect. Also, the incident of Nabatiyya transformed the nature of Shi'i symbolism and the collective message it brought on to the Shi'i community; *Ashura* became the vehicle for active opposition against the 'alien' occupier and aggressor, while the head of the Higher Islamic Shi'ite Council issued a *fatwa* proclaiming 'civil resistance'. Shi'i anger against Israel was evident in the following days when, during the practice of sermons in mosques throughout the country, Israel was exorcised and condemned as 'the absolute evil'. Within this context, the celebration of the death of Husein became the symbol of revolt against oppression; hence, the death in the name of divine justice signified the triumph of the revolution.

Due to the success of the Lebanese Resistance, in 1984, the Israeli forces decided to check the ceremony at Nabatiyya. The officials of Amal reacted by organising a counter-celebration, in between two villages, Harouf and Kfar, in the southwest off the Nabatiyya. In sheer contrast to the limited significance of the 'Israeli' celebration, the success of the Amal-sponsored ceremony signified the extent of Shi'i communal mobilisation, and the real dimensions of Amal's power base in the south. Amal was elevated to the status of the main Shi'i organisation, capable of leading the main Shi'i ceremony despite the Israeli manoeuvring. The anti-Israeli communal struggle was placed under Amal's patronage. In this way, the movement legitimised its own authority amongst the Shi'ites and thus transformed the Shi'i communal boundaries, through the re-invention of Shi'i symbolism. Hence, at a prior stage, Musa al-Sadr invented a symbolism strictly borrowed by Shi'i religious tradition. With the rise of a new communal leadership, the channels of authority were transferred from the religious to the political level.

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<sup>57</sup> Yves Gonzalez-Quijano, "Les interpretations d'un rite: célébrations de la 'Achoura au Liban'", p. 19.

Through the extension of the ritual to all the main Shi'i territories, the movement detached itself from religion, while it was placed within new territorial boundaries. In essence, from the period when Musa al-Sadr addressed the disinherited as a broad social category, the limits that warfare posed to the self-protective strategy of the movement redrew the boundaries of Shi'i identity. *Ashura* of 1984 demonstrated the newly acquired strength of the movement as an important political player, possessing the sole legitimate authority to address collectively the Shi'i community.<sup>58</sup>

Nevertheless, during this period the eventual fragmentation of communal leadership paved the way for the construction of a counter-symbolism sponsored by Hizballah. Borrowed from the Shi'i religious tradition, this new form of symbolism became adjusted to the internal organisation and the political strategy of Hizballah; so much so that the movement transformed the original message, so that it could justify its own existence and role within the warfare. It did so in accordance with the religious principle of *wilaya al-faqih*,<sup>59</sup> the theory of the Governance of the 'virtuous jurist', found in the Khomainist theory of government. Through the reformulation of this theory, a safe passage opens for the transference of authority to the just jurisconsult in the absence of the Twelfth *Imam*. The authority of *Wali al-faqih* has no restraints and his wisdom is recognised as the only legitimate one, derived from its association with God and the family of the Prophet. The so-called *fuqaha al-salatin*, the 'Sultan's theologians', a term constructed by Khomaini, was used so as to denounce the traditional submissive role of the *ulama*, who taught that misery and injustice should be endured until the return of the 'Hidden *Imam*.' Thus the focus is situated on the activist authority of the *ulama* to rise against injustice. This theory became the 'foundation myth' of the Iranian revolution, in the sense that those of the *ulama* who did not co-operate with the *Shah* provided the revolutionary front line to be led by the *mujtahidun* (*ayatollahs*). The 'virtuous *faqih*', the leader of all these religious categories, was possibly sought in the face of Khomeini.<sup>60</sup> This

<sup>58</sup> Yves Gonzalez-Quijano, "Les Interpretations d'un Rite: Célébrations de la 'Achoura au Liban'", p.p. 20-21.

<sup>59</sup> On the principle of *Wilayat al-faqih*, and the way this was used, within the context of Hizballah, see As'ad AbuKhalil, "Ideology and Practice of Hizballah in Lebanon: Islamization of Leninist Organizational Principles", in *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 27, no.3, July 1991. See also, Nizar Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Hizbullah: from Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation"; Chibli Mallat, *Shi'i thought from the South of Lebanon*, Papers on Lebanon, no. 7. Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1988.

<sup>60</sup> The actual hierarchy of the Iranian *ulama* is as following; above the lowest categories of mullahs, stand the *mujtahidun* with authority on matters of Jurisprudence and above these the *marj'a al-taqlid* which provide 'models of imitation' as prominent figures of authority. In theory, members of the last group were supposed to accept one of their rank in each generation as the supreme *marja'*. For more

group of clerics were to acquire power in the post-revolutionary state, each of them according to his rank, legitimising in this way the linkage between political action and Shi'i Islam; that in essence, the *ulama* were designated to control the government. Hence, with the re-elaboration of the theory of the *wilaya al-faqih*, Khomeini furnished the role of the 'virtuous jurist', and in effect his own, with both religious and political authority.<sup>61</sup> The theory was linked to temporal politics in the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran; the latter constitution put political power in the hands of the *faqih*.<sup>62</sup>

The theory was used by Hizballah so as to justify the organisational logic of power in the hands of the religious leadership. The religious categories were the ones responsible for a wide array of decisions within committees of thought, finance, political affairs, information, military affairs, media, judicial and social affairs; a sign of the immense powers of the religious class to deal with temporal issues. In addition, through the main theory on which the Iranian Revolution was founded and established, the connection of the movement with the Iranian model becomes rationalised and legitimised.

It may not have been a coincidence that since the period of 1984-1985, when the organisation came into the open, a whole new discourse was constructed and transmitted, with the invocation of terms directly associated with the Shi'i tradition but with strong connotations for the current socio-political situation. The new message of the Shi'i myths and symbols was distant from the prior submissive and quiescent message. Shi'i Islam was transformed into a revolutionary principle, in that it deals "*not just with the relationship between man and his creator inside the mosque, but extends to every aspect of human activity, including the confrontation with those who try to trespass on human rights and usurp people's rights.*"<sup>63</sup> Within this new context, Islamic Resistance signified "*a pan-Islamic view aimed at rejuvenating Islamic thinking, Islamic fact, Islamic policy, and Islamic legislation in a general sense. It encompasses all freedom fighters, mujahedeen, without need for political platform or*

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information on this hierarchy, see Emmanuel Sivan, "Sunni Radicalism in the Middle East and The Iranian Revolution", p. 9.

<sup>61</sup> See, Emmanuel Sivan, "Sunni Radicalism in the Middle East and The Iranian Revolution", p. 10.

<sup>62</sup> The fifth article of the constitution in particular provisions for the concentration of political power in the *faqih* and in his absence, or in the case of controversy over succession political authority is transferred to the High Command of the three or five *mujtahidun*, the most prominent in their generation.

<sup>63</sup> Ayatollah al-Sayyed Muhammed Hussein Fadl Allah, "The Islamic Resistance in Lebanon and the Palestinian Uprising: The Islamic Jihad Perspective", p. 4. For an elaborate analysis of the discourse of Ayatollah Muhammed Hussein Fadl Allah, see also the following series of his articles in the Middle East Insight; "Islam and Violence in Political Reality", no.4, nos-4-5, 1986; "An Islamic Perspective on the Lebanese Experience" Summer 1988; also, Exclusive Interview with Sheikh Muhammed Hussein Fadl Allah, by George Nader, Middle East Insight June-July 1985.



*militia organization, but the spiritual willingness to defend the cause of God, which is an imperative duty exactly the same as prayers or fasting. Just as Muslims do not need any organizational effort to regulate their prayer relationships, the Islamic resistance became the banner for all those who want to join the jihad activities that seek to confront global and regional arrogance represented in imperialism, Zionism, e.t.c.*"<sup>64</sup> Consequently, a central aspect of the new discourse, formulated with the rise of Hizballah, was the broadening of the notion of *jihad*, its elevation to the level of the fundamental responsibilities and duties of the Muslim believer. Thus, the invented symbolism closely linked the member to the movement. It was this bond that was used as a source of authority for the organisation, as is demonstrated in the way the organisation actually mobilises the members around its goals and strategy.

The great potential of this new discourse in mobilising the Shi'i masses, and its adjustment to the logic of warfare, became apparent every time the Lebanese committed a successful attack against the Israeli Defence Force. It was then that the occupying forces replied by harsh campaigns of repression against the population of the south. Instead of inhibiting further support, the reprisals motivated large numbers of people to join resistance. A new form of opposition was formed, based on sacrificial death in the name of communal salvation. Young Shi'i fighters volunteered to drive vehicles full of explosives into Israeli targets and into their own death. While committing the act of sacrifice, the victim did not act as an individual but functioned as a substitute for all the members of the community. Through the destruction of an enemy, deemed as responsible for its plight and suffering, sacrifice served as the only way for the restoration of harmony within the community.<sup>65</sup> The whole act was dramatised when the martyr, identified with Husein, fought the murderers and the usurpers, the Israeli aggressors, in his search for justice. In this way, communal identity is 'reinvented' through the process of '*collective individualism*'<sup>66</sup>, when collectivised stories are turned into historical myths. Hence the past, the present and the future are intertwined, reinforcing the collective aspect, converting history into time and space and enabling the community to surpass its own limits. The Shi'i community used its collective history in order to interpret a world of real events and achieved the creation of an invented one, in which the past came alive in the present. Through this process, boundaries between the group and the 'other' are becoming even deeper and more

<sup>64</sup> Ayatollah al-Sayyed Muhammed Hussein Fadl Allah, "The Islamic Resistance in Lebanon and the Palestinian Uprising: The Islamic Jihad Perspective", p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> For more details on the sacrificial death, see the first chapter of R.Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, Trans. Patrick Gregory, London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1977.

<sup>66</sup> David Apter, *The Legitimization of Violence*, p.12.



exclusive, while communal violence, carrying its own purifying and redemptive message, creates its own history.

In essence, what could be argued is that there is nothing intrinsic in the way both the Shi'i movements monopolised the religious myths and symbols. In fact, the same process could refer to the concept of the 'citizen-mobilising' and 'citizen-influencing state', whereas warfare placed the ordinary citizens at the top of the state's political agenda.<sup>67</sup> Therein lies the political function of the so-called state-sponsored patriotism, as a way in which the state forged both the emotional and material allegiance of its citizens to their 'nation' and their 'nationality'. Hence, the original popular idea and symbolism of patriotism is nothing more than a guise of the citizens' compliance with the state authority, that is, the state authority "of exercising power in its name."<sup>68</sup>

The ritual becomes a vehicle for the individuals in their attempt to comprehend the reality of warfare. For the organisation though, it becomes the medium through which it rationalises its own authority, its own course of action; and this is a political function, used by the military organisations in Lebanon, in order to bring the mobilisation of their members around their 'cause'. In addition, the political interpretation of the myths and symbols is situated within the same old logic of political bargaining and the construction of the same channels of authority that the state had previously created. It is not a coincidence that both Shi'i organisations, Amal and Hizballah, used more or less the same ways to legitimise their authority and their power struggle; in the same way that the state ruling classes and elites transformed the "folkloric rediscovery of the 'people'" into a "national tradition."<sup>69</sup>

The same sort of objectives became apparent during the celebration of *Ashura* in 1985, when Amal demonstrated its power, with the march of its militants in the quarter of Bourj al-Barajnieh, at a period when it had resumed the 'War of the Camps' with the Palestinians. The same more or less fighting spirit encroached on the *Ashura* celebration under the patronage of Hizballah; hence, the introduction of the Iranian techniques of exorcising the spirits, the Iranian flags, the green and black flag of Islam, and a new spatial presence for the organisation. In the aftermath of the warfare with Amal, the Hizballah-sponsored ritual was extended from the main centre of the movement, in the Ba'albek, to all the main Shi'i areas, in both Beirut and

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<sup>67</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p. 83.

<sup>68</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p. 87.

<sup>69</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p.p. 103-104.

the south. This fact demonstrated the new territorial and military strength of the movement, its domination in the southern suburbs of Beirut.

### *5.3 Conclusion*

This chapter introduced a new liaison between war making and state making. Far from given, the established notion of state is reified through the activity of the major Shi'i military organisations in war-torn Lebanon. These organisations predominated as the main agents of coercion. Through this function, they constructed a whole new network of authority. They built up whole organisations and internal structures so as to regulate more efficiently the flow of revenues gained out of their illicit practices. Moreover through these internal structures, they became the main distributors of socio-economic rewards to the war-stricken population. In terms of identity formation, as these militias became the ultimate authorities within society, they forged the respective allegiances of the population according to the exigencies of their warfare activity. As the militias acquired the authority to speak for the divine order, they reformulated the Shi'i myths and symbols so as to legitimise their course of action.

Consequently this new version of war making and state making brings a series of interesting inferences to the traditional pattern, established within the context of the European states. First, in contexts other than the established ones the prevalent notion of state authority is a lot less than given. Thus second, entities other than the state could actually perform the main functions that are supposed to be exclusively performed by the state. Within this different context, third, war making brings a different inference to state making. Hence, far from redefining firmer state structures, warfare in Lebanon functioned so as to de-legitimise state authority, while asserting the authority of the prevalent military organisations. Overall though, these militias acted in rather similar ways as the conventional 'state' and they had to face the same dilemmas that the established states face. As the case of the Shi'i intra-communal fragmentation demonstrates, the military organisations struggled for political power and predominance. In their turn, they posed similar security dilemma to the power-seeking strategies of their rival military groups. Consequently, as the logic of war wove the state structures in the context of the established states, warfare in Lebanon wove the internal structures of the respective militias. These militias took up the main role of the state; they became the main agents of coercion and the premium distributors of socio-economic rewards among the population. They acquired the authority to

forge identity boundaries among the population, a role so far perceived as the ultimate state prerogative.

On the one hand, this pattern of war making and state making demonstrates the similarities between state authority and the authority ascribed to other entities, acting outside the boundaries of what has been traditionally perceived as the 'state'. On the other hand though, the military organisations in Lebanon functioned along the same lines that the Ottoman, Mandate and Independent State of Lebanon functioned in the pre-war period. Passing through these different contexts, it seems that actors and issues change overtime. However, a source of continuity with the past has been maintained in terms of functions and roles of the main political players of each stage. In effect, within the context of warfare the main components of pre-war Lebanon still exist, the blurred boundaries between the internal and external sources of authority, intra-communal fragmentation, as well as the prevalence of indirect channels of authority between the population and the ailing state. Consequently, these are the main components that differentiate the paradigm of warfare in Lebanon from the mainstream paradigm of war making and state making. These same components are the ones to define the different version of civilianisation in post-war Lebanon, as will be explained in the following chapter.

## ***PART IV***

### ***State Reconstruction in Post-War Lebanon***

## ***6. From Militarisation to Civilianisation: Shi'i Community in Post-War Lebanon***

This final chapter of the thesis bridges all the previous contexts with the post-Taif state reconstruction in Lebanon. There are certain components of the prior historical contexts of Ottoman, Mandate, Independent state of Lebanon that are recycled throughout the post-war state construction. Thus, the post-war state in Lebanon regained its coercive authority and was legitimised through the process of demobilisation of the previous militias. Hence in the context of war, the coercive authority of the militias was legitimised at the expense of state authority. In the post-war context, the relegation of authority from the militias to the state de-legitimised the formers' authority to the benefit of the state. The integration of the prevalent military elites into the post-Taif state is a familiar process of bargaining between the state and the dominant elites within it. Nonetheless, these elites brought to the heart of the state all the practices and roles that pre-existed in all the different historical contexts that were presented throughout the thesis. Hence, an increasing externality of state sovereignty, internal fragmentation and the predominance of indirect channels of authority between the population and the state are the main attributes to define the post-war state in Lebanon. These components account for the different course of state reconstruction vis-à-vis the mainstream state paradigm.

### ***6.1 The Road to State Reconstruction in Lebanon***

In the aftermath of both the state formation and warfare in Lebanon, the prevalent balance of power was established out of the bargaining between internal and external political actors. The developments that led to the end of warfare were, once more, determined by various factors, international, regional and domestic. These forged a precarious balance, defined by the same old lax and blurred boundaries between the internal and external domains of authority and the same logic of bargaining between the various political actors.

By the end of the eighties, this changing international, regional and domestic balance of power was to a large extent reflected in the Document of National Reconciliation. Under the influence of the new circumstances, a split with the former failures for reconciliation took



place.<sup>1</sup> In the past, the major attempts for a resolution to the Lebanese conflict proved fruitless due to the unfavourable international, regional and domestic factors.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, by the end of the eighties an alteration of the external circumstances, combined with the already changing domestic context, rendered an eventual solution more feasible. First, the end of the Cold War era, with the U.S. predominance as the main power, opened the way for the redefinition of the American objectives and policy in the Middle East. In the aftermath of the Iran-Iraq war, a mounting Iraqi assertion in the politics of the region increased the American need for guaranteed access to the Persian Gulf oil reserves. Hence, in view of the reviewed American strategy in the Middle East, the stabilisation of the region could do no more than increase the Syrian position in the region. With the U.S. as the dominant party, a rapprochement with Syria became imminent; Syria found the latter profitable, at a time when it had to face the loss of the Soviet military support. Within this context, the significance of Lebanon for the American interests rose, and the solution to the war was treated as a first step towards the accommodation of other serious regional problems. In this way, the role of Syria within the Lebanese war was legitimised in the American eyes; and the internal political developments encouraged the even more active Syrian involvement in Lebanon, with the American blessing this time.

In the domestic political scene, a serious impasse emerged in 1988, with the splitting of the political institutions between two governments, each treating itself as the only 'legitimate' government. This fact coupled with the inability of the parliament to elect a President, led to the subsequent 'war of liberation'. The latter war conducted against Syria by the interim Prime Minister, General Michel Aoun, accelerated the pace of the political developments towards the

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<sup>1</sup> The major peace-making initiatives during the period between 1975 and 1989 are as follows; The National Dialogue Committee, held in 25 September-24 November 1975; the Constitutional Document proposed by President Franjeh on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 1976; the Riyadh-Cairo Arab Summit Conferences held in October 1976; the Geneva-Lausanne Conference held between 31 October and 4 November, 1983 and between 12 and 20 March, 1984; and the Damascus Tripartite Agreement signed on 28 December, 1985. For more details on these see, Hani A. Faris, "The failure of Peace Keeping in Lebanon, 1975-1989", in Deidre Collings (ed.), *Peace For Lebanon? From War to Reconstruction*, Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994, p.p. 17-30.

<sup>2</sup> First, the Cold War and the competition between the two superpowers for influence in the Middle East rendered every attempt for conciliation all the more difficult. Second, within the regional context, the inter-Arab bickering was transplanted into Lebanon, as its factionalised political institutions offered a lot of opportunities for the exploitation of the regional actors; these actors, in their attempt to promote their interests, offered their sponsorship to the various Lebanese opposing groups. In their turn these groups, through the continuous warfare, became conditioned to function and act with an intense battlefield spirit opting for the military settlement of the issues involved; they sought to gain military advantage vis-à-vis their opponents through fighting; throughout the years of the heavy fighting, they became evolved to whole military organisations, materially profiting from the disintegrated state apparatus; thus, they had a stake in the continuation of the warfare. Toward this objective, they used the Arab dissension of interests so as to forge alliances with external parties that supported and boosted their military programs.

resolution of the crisis. Hence, the Tripartite High Commission was founded by the Arab League to work on a solution to the crisis, convenient to the main actors involved. Nonetheless, due to the intractable Syrian rejection of any involvement that would undermine Syrian grip over Lebanon, an eventual agreement was accepted by Damascus only to legitimise a Syrian *fait accompli*.

In addition, at the end of the eighties the opposing Lebanese militias moved from the intransigent attitudes of the previous stages; quite weakened due to their intensive internal factionalism, these militias were *de facto* led to more conciliatory moves. During this period, the changing mood of both the major political players and the population became apparent. Since the mid 1980s, the Lebanese economy rapidly deteriorated;<sup>3</sup> due to the heavy fighting and the appropriation of state revenues by the militias, a huge gap opened between the upper and lower classes, with the middle classes virtually out of the picture. This fact combined with the serious factionalism of the militias themselves, could only alienate the majority of the Lebanese population from the militias and prioritise the need for a more definite solution.

The pressure posed by these internal but most importantly external factors, meant that any future agreement had to somehow accommodate the diverse interests of the different actors. Consequently, this fact rendered the whole process no more than a deliberate bargaining, with very limited ground for manoeuvring, especially on the part of the major domestic actors. In fact, the Taif agreement, as was presented, did not leave any chance for amendment, it had either to be accepted or rejected as a whole. Second, the role of the external players was apparent in that the agreement was prepared by the so-called 'Troika', constituted of the kings of Saudi Arabia, Morocco and the President of Algeria, under the auspices of the Arab League. The U.S. observed the subsequent negotiations, while the final text of the agreement was constructed after close consultation with Syria.

In terms of the sovereignty of the Lebanese State, established in Taif, this was defined in close connection with the Syrian interests; in fact, what the agreement accomplished on the external domain of state authority was the legitimisation of the Syrian presence within Lebanon.

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<sup>3</sup> In 1984, the national economy and currency suffered, under the heavy strain posed by the rapid political developments of the period that were soon out of control. First, the Israeli invasion in 1982 caused extensive damages to the infrastructural network. The evacuation of the PLO, following the invasion, brought the serious decrease of financial contributions. Added to that, the resumption of hostilities in the area of Beirut, from September 1983, was a major disruption for the industrial and commercial activities. The effect of these developments was the unprecedented down fall of the Lebanese lira, in the period between 1984 and 1987, from 3 to 430 to the U.S. dollar, while inflation flew to over 100% per annum. On these developments, see, William Harris, *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions*, Princeton: Wiener Publishers, 1997, p.p. 205-206.

This was done in various ways; first, the agreement opened the way for the restoration of the post-war government, the so-called National Unity Government, based in Western Beirut, an area under the control of the Syrian army. In its turn, the Syrian army would remain in Lebanon for at least two years after the re-establishment of the government and eighteen months after the dissolution of the militias. Second, the agreement provided for a constitutional adjustment, but before any Syrian redeployment, a fact that gave Syria a lot of ground for potential manipulation. The 'state sovereignty' clauses are more striking though; these clauses explicitly rendered Syria a guarantor of the government itself, authorising Syrian military intervention against perceived opponents of the government.<sup>4</sup>

In the institutional level, the confessional formulae was maintained, but on an equal distribution of posts between the Christians and the Muslims. Moreover, through the Taif, the role of the President was diminished to a formal role, while the role of the Prime Minister was granted enhanced power. Most importantly, the Taif ascribed a rather reinforced role for the legislative power, as the dissolution of the Parliament was made impossible unless it decided to dissolve itself.

Notwithstanding the changes that Taif Agreement established in Lebanon, its content and the way it was implemented, at a subsequent stage, revealed the same logic that penetrated the previous agreements that had established the sovereignty of the pre-war state in Lebanon. First, the co-existence of the various communities was once more maintained, as the main basis of the state system. Nevertheless, de-confessionalisation became a future objective; and this was the case with both the National Pact and the independent state itself. Hence, instead of explicitly dealing with de-confessionalisation, the Accord rendered it attainable in the future, without setting a clear deadline for its implementation. This fact revealed the obstacles of de-confessionalisation, especially in view of the hard-line feelings that warfare had instilled in the attitudes of both the warring factions and the broad segments of the population. Second, both the *Réglement Organique* and, later, the National Pact were brokered with the contribution of both the existing elites and the external patrons, such as the Ottomans and the French. Along similar lines, the Taif Accord was the product of the remaining old elites, the new leadership of the former warlords, as well as the even more active 'contribution' of several other external parties. All these actors, in effect, had a stake in the way the post-war balance of power within Lebanon would be established. This reproduced tendency was revealed, at a subsequent stage,

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<sup>4</sup> For a commentary of the Taif Accord, see, Joseph Maila, "The Taif Accord: An Evaluation", in Deidre Collings, *Peace For Lebanon? From War to Reconstruction*, p.p.31-44.

when Taif Accord became implemented due to the changing external political developments;<sup>5</sup> in fact, it was the external political scene that determined the course of implementation of the agreement. This was not an unfamiliar process, as the pace of 'external' developments at an earlier stage had determined the fate of the National Pact as well. Finally, the National Pact defined the boundaries of the independent State of Lebanon, excluding to a large extent the wider segments of the population. In the same way the Taif Accord drew the boundaries of the Lebanese post-war state, on the basis of the subjugation of the 'national will' to the influence of other variables.<sup>6</sup>

## ***6.2 Resumption of State Authority: Incorporation of Shi'i Military Organisations into the Post-War State Structures***

### ***6.2.1 Demobilisation of Shi'i Militias: Resumption of State's Coercive Capability***

The resumption of the state's authority precipitated the process of disarmament. The state army was elevated to the status of the main controller of the situation with explicit orders to prohibit the carrying of arms, to check and block both the 'tax' collection by the militias as well as the militias' offices and to arrest suspect persons for gun possession. The process of demilitarisation launched according to the Law 88, passed by the parliament in June 13, 1991. This law opted for the unconditional demobilisation of the militias and their integration into the regular forces of the state and the public service. However, before the implementation of the Law 88, in March 1991, the army occupied the headquarters of the main militia forces and confiscated their arms, while at the same time it entered the 'militias' ports and resumed control.<sup>7</sup>

As with the established state paradigm, the disarmament of the opposing military factions in Lebanon coincided with the reassertion of state's coercive authority. Throughout the war, the

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<sup>5</sup> The implementation of the Taif became imminent at the period of the Gulf war with the resumption of the Taif process by the then President Elias Hrawi. For more details on the resumption of the process, in the light of the changing regional and international environment, see Theodor Hanf, *Co-existence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, p.p. 608-609.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. 47-51.

<sup>7</sup> On the re-construction of the Army and the resumption of the state's co-ercive capabilities see, Theodor Hanf, *Co-existence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, p.p. 613 and 615-617.

various militias became established as self-sufficient economic entities that prospered at the expense of the state. In the new situation the state regained the control of the main activities out of which the warlords had previously prospered. This means that the former warlords lost a large part of their income, becoming significantly weakened. In addition, the war revealed the inability of each one of the various militias to predominate over the rest. Once more, the ambiguous principle of 'no winner no loser' functioned as a bargaining chip for the opposing factions, as was the case in the aftermath of every major crisis in pre-war State of Lebanon. Thus, after nearly fifteen years of warfare and without any definite winner in sight, the same principle was once more reaffirmed.

At a previous stage the French Mandate had created its own elites that sought to transfer their authority to the independent State of Lebanon. As warfare created its own military elites, having realised the impasse they were found in, these elites sought to keep their privileges, but within the 'civil' state institutions. In essence, the resumption of the state's coercive capability rendered any other form of coercion existing outside the state's jurisdiction de-legitimised. This fact created a rationale on the part of the combatants, for compliance with the legitimate authority of the state. What will be assessed, at a next stage, is the implementation of the demilitarisation process, regarding the main Shi'i militias, Amal and Hizballah. According to the established model of state formation, the demilitarisation of society may be one factor; nonetheless it is not enough in itself. What makes demilitarisation an effective process is the building up of sufficient civil institutions and procedures that support the passing of both the state and society from warfare to 'civil order' and 'normality.' It is in the light of these criteria that demilitarisation can be properly evaluated.

In the case of Amal, its demobilisation on the grounds of the Law 88 went smoothly without major sources of disruption. This was due to the fact that Amal was conditioned to function alongside the state itself; it participated in the 'national reconciliation' government in 1984, and controlled the Higher Council of the South through the position of Nabih Birri as its minister. Through these positions, a new elite of ambitious cadres within the movement had gained access to positions of public administration and had created their own clienteles. In the aftermath of the warfare with Hizballah and the loss of the southern suburbs of Beirut, the organisation was found in a crisis. In any case, throughout the war, Amal had suffered heavy losses that both its limited organisational ability and its lax central authority could not easily endure. By the end of the eighties the changing balance of power became apparent, due to Amal's own standing at this stage. In effect, an informal process of bargaining began for the



integration of the military recruits, and the clients of both the movement and its leader into state institutions, the civil service and the army. Hence, the existing entrenchment of Amal in the state, combined with the modest claims it raised regarding the transformation of the system, paved the way for its efficient incorporation into the reconstructed state structure.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, Hizballah was exempted from the process of demilitarisation. At the official level, the movement became sanctioned. However, as it became designated as a resistance force it continued to exist and fight against the Israeli occupation in the south. The term of resistance movement was employed in 1993, by the Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, amid Israeli demands for the dissolution of Hizballah by the Lebanese Army. Thus, in a way its continuing existence was legitimised by the state. Nevertheless, as it will be explained at a subsequent stage, the exemption of Hizballah from the demilitarisation process can be understood within the context of the regional balance of power,<sup>9</sup> rather than within the state's initiative to keep Hizballah in the military field as a counterbalance to Israel. A part of Hizballah's military equipment was given to the state and the last western hostages were liberated; in addition, the use of weaponry as well as the carrying out of military training of the Hizballah's fighters became concealed and carried out in places distant from the public. However, the military wing of the movement was reinforced during the stage of state reconstruction. In addition, rather than incorporation into state-sponsored agencies, Hizballah continued to mobilise a great many recruits, coming from the lower strata of the population, suffering unemployment and being motivated, to a great measure, by the prestigious salary that the movement could provide.<sup>10</sup>

With the implementation of demilitarisation, contrary to the wider expectations for recovery and prosperity with the termination of hostilities, the transitional situation was rather discouraging. The serious economic crisis that had begun in 1987 went on up until the spring of 1992, when the downfall of the Lebanese Lira reached its nadir. In addition, the dissolution of the militias brought about a serious loss of the benefits derived from membership, as well as rising levels of unemployment for those who were not reintegrated in the state apparatus. Consequently, the living standards seriously deteriorated and serious issues were raised,

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<sup>8</sup> For more details on the demobilization of Amal, see, Elizabeth Picard, *The Demobilization of the Lebanese Militias*, Series Prospects for Lebanon, no. 9, October 1999, Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, p.p. 14-17.

<sup>9</sup> See, 136-140 ff.

<sup>10</sup> For more details on the demobilization of Hizballah, see Elizabeth Picard, *The Demobilization of the Lebanese Militias*, p.p.17-20.

concerning the economic incorporation of the militia into the regular economic activities of the state. During the war years, the various militias had gained at least a regular income from the taxes they imposed on airports, ports and other illicit economic activities they had established. As the state resumed its authority to collect the main revenues, the militias were in search of ways to counterbalance the continuing economic transgression. Hence, they made claims to the state and other ex militias; and these claims in effect derived from their paramilitary financial activities and arrangements throughout war. As they were incorporated into the state, the former militias mediated between a great many entrepreneurs, with whom they had previously brokered arrangements, and the state. In their attempt to keep their advantages and privileges within the changing balance of power, or to gain political access to the ruling circles, these entrepreneurs became the clients of the ex-militias.<sup>11</sup>

At another level, the economic activity of the state was rejuvenated in the form of the major reconstruction programme, the so-called Solidere, under the sponsorship of the Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. Despite the new projects centred on Beirut's re-establishment as a prestigious tourist resort, the fact was that most of these projects mainly focused on the centre, leaving broad regions outside Beirut in the same more or less disadvantaged position. The Shi'i segments of the population that continued to inhabit peripheral regions such as Hirmil, Bekaa and the south were once more in the pre-war situation; serious lack of adequate schooling, electricity, water network and roads.<sup>12</sup> This uneven reconstruction of the post-war infrastructure was extended within Beirut itself. While the reconstruction programmes made a lot of difference in the western part of the city, the eastern part and the southern suburbs remained underdeveloped and almost neglected. This fact could do no more than raise suspicions, regarding the reconstruction of the Sunni western part of the city, in sheer contrast to the Christian eastern part and the Shi'i southern suburbs.<sup>13</sup>

The governmental gaps in terms of regional development and reconstruction in the post-war period opened, once more, the way for both the Shi'i parties and their respective social programmes in the most underprivileged Shi'i regions. Consequently large-scaled programmes were initiated for the provision of support for independent farmers, aiming at agricultural

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<sup>11</sup> For more details on these functions of militias see, Elizabeth Picard, *The Demobilization of the Lebanese Militias*, p.p.33-38.

<sup>12</sup> For more details on the development of these regions see the following; Hassan Charif, "Regional Development and Integration"; Ahmed A. Sbaity, "Reflections on Lebanon's Reconstruction"; Hussein A. Amery & Atif A. Kubursi, "The Litani River: The Case Against Interbasin Transfer". In Deidre Collins, *Peace For Lebanon? From War to Reconstruction*, p.p. 151-194.

<sup>13</sup> See William Harris, *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions*, p.p. 287-288.

development and rising of living standards. The Ministry of the South under Birri's presidency carried out a number of large developmental projects in the south. Along the same lines, Hizballah undertook significant projects for agricultural development, as well as for the provision of health, transport and housing needs.<sup>14</sup> Firstly, these initiatives may have been undertaken under the guise of state institutions, but ended up elevating the party involved as the main benefactor; this was clearly the case of Amal-led projects. Consequently, even though Amal's developmental programs were implemented under the auspices of the state's formal institution of the Ministry of the South, they ended up promoting the social role of the party rather than the state. Secondly, as the case of Hizballah's developmental programs demonstrated, less than state-sponsored, the initiatives undertaken promoted the party as the main agent of provision for the population. In either case the boundaries of this provision were regionally and confessionally limited.

On the one hand, the process of demilitarisation brought the state back in, as the main controller of coercion that eventually erased the long existing illegitimate violence of war. On the other hand, the piecemeal and asymmetrical implementation of the military demobilisation places the whole process in doubt. Both the demilitarisation and the reconstruction of the state's 'civil' institutions, represent two sides of the same token, that is, the state's rehabilitated legitimacy. At least this is the established concept of state legitimacy and the passing from the stage of militarisation to the subsequent stage of 'civilianisation' of state institutions. In essence, according to the established paradigm the effectiveness of demilitarisation is not sought in the automatic relegation of coercive authority to the state. The re-establishment of state coercive authority is implemented only gradually, when the state has accomplished some degree of homogenisation and uniformity of administrative arrangements, supported by 'civil' institutions, as alternatives to the various military poles of authority. As the case of the Shi'i military organisations and their incorporation into the state institutions demonstrated, the military demobilisation in Lebanon was not symmetrical as it was addressed to some militias, like Amal, but not to some others, such as Hizballah. Second, the situation in the first years of the post-war state in Lebanon revealed a serious gap, in terms of institutions designed to unify the highly fragmented 'civil' society. Even though in one way or another, the various militias were to some degree incorporated into the state, the state, in its turn, failed to instil this sense of 'uniformity' on the pragmatic grounds of policies, addressing all the various segments of the

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<sup>14</sup> For more details on the developmental projects of both Amal and HizbAllah see, Judith Harik, *The Public and Social Services of the Lebanese Militias*, p.p. 34-39.

population. Functioning within the 'legality' of a segmented state-system, the ex-militias could do no more than reflect the same fragmented structure of this system. This was the case for both the Shi'i organisations of Amal and Hizballah and their role in the post-war reconstructed state system. Social and political fragmentation, however, was a component of the pre-war state in Lebanon;<sup>15</sup> added to that, the presence of the diverse channels of authority as distributors of socio-economic rewards is still a ubiquitous element of the state's social control over the population.<sup>16</sup> In the same way that the 'nation-state' acted to ensure its political continuity, by keeping the main components of its pre-war structure, the reconstructed state in Lebanon pointed to the same objective of political continuity. Likewise, the Shi'i organisations of both Amal and Hizballah adjusted to the same logic of political continuity both in warfare and 'civil' contexts.

#### *6.2.2 Transformation of Militias into Parliamentarians: Construction of the Political Institutions of the State*

The involvement of the previous military elite in the Taif negotiations legitimised its parliamentary presence and its participation in the formal institutions of the re-constructed state. Throughout warfare, the military organisations rose to prominence as self-sufficient entities, coercive and distributive agents; and, after a period of political bargaining they came to constitute the state itself. The way these new elites were incorporated into the post-Taif state structure does not present an unfamiliar process. They were integrated in very similar ways that the Ottoman, Colonial and Independent State of Lebanon had previously incorporated and functioned via their respective elites that were, to a large extent, forged by the central authority and acting with its blessing.

This was the case of the Shi'i elites, throughout the different forms of state structures; they were integrated into, and reproduced the prevailing state structure itself. Thus, an increasingly fragmented political structure at the top level of the state could do no more than forge a similar fragmentation in the nature and function of its constituent parts, i.e. the confessional leadership. In addition, the political process of state formation was based on the implicit or explicit alliances and bargaining between the prevalent elites. In a very similar way, this sort of logic

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. 61-72.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. 67- 71.

was reflected in agreements and manoeuvrings that eventually became an indivisible part of the subsequent processes of state building. This sort of processes became apparent at a subsequent stage, throughout the first post-war elections that took place in 1992.<sup>17</sup> In general terms, the elections seriously detached the Taif Accord from the actual political practice, as they were highly questionable both in terms of timing and representativeness. The great extent of political plotting throughout the electoral period, as well as the actual results of the elections represented the new tendencies in the post-war Lebanese political scene. Central were the attempts of the various political actors, who had predominated in the prior phase of warfare, to get their share in the post-Taif distribution of power. Rather than implementing the letter of Taif, the electoral process was defined in a way that encouraged the inception of the traditional warlords in the Parliament.

Consequently, the Taif electoral arrangements stipulated the redrawing of the electoral boundaries on the basis of provinces rather than local districts. Despite this provision, the amendment of the electoral law, passed by the Parliament on the eve of the elections, was a hybrid of both the old and the new system. In fact, it was tailored according to the preferences of the pro-Syrian candidates and the fervent supporters of the new system, who sought to integrate themselves in it; on the other hand, it worked at the expense of their opponents. The electoral law set at Taif aimed at creating some sort of confessional balance by giving the chance for inter-communal alliances, especially in provinces that held majorities representing a single confession. Rather than keeping this sort of inter-communal balance, the law, on the basis of which the elections of 1992 took place, adapted to the aims of particular candidates, with the awkward and, in many respects, arbitrary distribution of the electoral provinces of major importance in terms of the electorate.

The case of Amal and the way the movement, via its leader, Nabih Birri, led an active strategy of bargaining for the distribution of the electoral seats in the south, was very indicative of the general tendencies of the political actors vis-à-vis the elections. As the whole area of the south, according to the Taif Accord, would be divided into two electoral provinces, the Nabatiyya and the south, Birri rose to object this arrangement. He clearly opted for the treatment of the two provinces as one single district. The treatment of each of these districts as one electoral province on its own right would do no more than lead the local, traditional lords

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<sup>17</sup> For a profound study of the 1992 elections, see, Farid el Khazen, *Lebanon's First Post War Parliamentary Elections, 1992: An Imposed Choice*, Oxford: Centre For Lebanese Studies, February 1998.



straight to the Parliament. The unification of the two provinces into a single constituency would render the victory of Birri's list more formidable, emerging out of one large and overwhelmingly Shi'i province rather than out of a splintered Shi'i region. Consequently, even though the two provinces were kept administratively divided, they were electorally unified, a fact which accounted for a major irregularity in the conduct of the elections.<sup>18</sup> A second aspect was the increase of the parliamentary seats from 108 to 128, once more in sheer contrast with the letter of Taif Accord. The twenty extra parliamentary seats were divided between the main sects. Thus, within the Muslim bloc the extra seats were split between the Sunnites and the Shi'ites while, in this way, the political power of the smaller sects such as the Druzes was seriously curbed.<sup>19</sup>

At another level, the participation of Hizballah in the elections and the subsequent result in its favour showed the alienation of the political system from the prior Islamic elements. By declaring its participation in the elections, despite its preliminary strong opposition to the Taif Accord, Hizballah decided to integrate itself in the post-Taif balance of power. Moreover, this decision showed the extent to which objectives on the basis of political bargaining, rather than on the basis of ideology, had in fact entrenched in the newly emerged system. This logic of bargaining became all the more evident at a subsequent stage, in the strategy of Hizballah throughout the electoral period. Thus, a distance was developed from the Islamist discourse of the prior period; the new discourse was formulated on the basis of a new sort of political activism, based on more concrete social, economic and political objectives.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, as extensive reconstructive programmes became organised and implemented by both Amal but most importantly Hizballah a new type of political patronage became established. The outcome of the election demonstrated the massive success of both parties in building a formidable constituency, due to the appeal that their respective services had, especially for the Shi'i population. The elections were boycotted while the overall turnout was very poor.<sup>21</sup> However in

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<sup>18</sup> For more details on the electoral strategy of Amal during the electoral process in 1992, see, Augustus Richard Norton & Jillian Schwedler, "Swiss Soldiers, Ta'if Clocks, and Early Elections: Toward a Happy Ending?" In Deidre Collings, *Peace For Lebanon? From War to Reconstruction*, p. 51.

<sup>19</sup> Augustus Richard Norton & Jillian Schwedler, "Swiss Soldiers, Ta'if Clocks, and Early Elections: Toward a Happy Ending?" In Deidre Collings, *Peace For Lebanon? From War to Reconstruction*, p. 51.

<sup>20</sup> Augustus Richard Norton & Jillian Schwedler, "Swiss Soldiers, Ta'if Clocks, and Early Elections: Toward a Happy Ending?" In Deidre Collings, *Peace For Lebanon? From War to Reconstruction*, p. 55.

<sup>21</sup> According to the same accounts given by Fared el Khazen, the total percentage of voting participation was 30.34. See, Farid el Khazen, *Lebanon's First Post War Parliamentary Elections, 1992: An Imposed Choice*.

view of this factor, the highest turnout rates of the Shi'i electorate,<sup>22</sup> could point to the determination of the Shi'i electorate to break free from their long established local patrons and the more definite choice they made, opting for the new counter-elites.

The outcome of the elections paved the way for the massive incorporation of these new Shi'i elites into the Parliament; the massive victory of the Amal-led list of candidates and the significant number of eight seats that Hizballah gained. An important issue that this outcome raised was the eventual incorporation of Hizballah into the institutional fabric of the state; this option would enhance the horizons of the movement, especially in the light of any future change in the military front of the south. In essence, the parliamentary incorporation of Hizballah was planned so as to anticipate any prospective Israeli withdrawal from the south and the diminishing of Hizballah's military presence as a result. In addition, due to its tight and effective organisation, Hizballah could gain a lot from the weaknesses of the state itself;<sup>23</sup> and the election outcome was indicative of this fact.

A second issue is the extent to which Hizballah's 'normalisation' could transform the nature of intra-communal opposition, between both Amal and Hizballah. In the 1992 elections, both Amal and Hizballah avoided the confrontation, and at some cases presented shared lists, allegedly for the sake of the Resistance in the south; however, the election results changed the main considerations of both movements. Apart from the popular support that Hizballah had already established in the Bekaa, traditionally its main stronghold, in the 1992 elections the movement managed to extend its constituency to the south as well. Thus, in one way or another, it posed a serious challenge to Amal; this became apparent on the eve of the 1996 elections, when Hizballah decided to run its own single lists and to keep its distance from Amal. This decision came as a result of Birri's determination to offer Hizballah only three out of the thirteen seats allocated to the Shi'ites in the south. In addition, Birri rendered the inclusion of Hizballah candidates conditional on their support of the pro-government candidates, included in his joint list. This took place, not accidentally, at a period when polls demonstrated an increasing popular support for Hizballah from the Shi'i constituency of the

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<sup>22</sup> According to the numbers given by Fared el Khazen's account of the elections, in the predominantly Shi'ite regions of the South and the Bekaa the percentage of voting participation was 38.08 and 46.09 respectively. See, Farid el Khazen, *Lebanon's First Post War Parliamentary Elections, 1992: An Imposed Choice*.

<sup>23</sup> This became apparent during Lebanon's hard winter of 1992, when Hizballah's relief services were very efficient in providing help, especially in the remotest villages of Bekaa; the government social services conspicuously did not. On this event, see Graham Usher, "Why Hizbullah's Wings have been Clipped: Hizbollah, Syria and the Lebanese Elections", in *News From Within*, vol. XII, no.11, December 1996, p. 34.

south. The eventual decision of Hizballah to run on a joint list with Amal, an alliance that was orchestrated by Syria, eventually curbed Hizballah's parliamentary participation; the movement gained seven seats compared with the eight it had gained in the 1992 elections. Nevertheless, the actual lobbying that occurred between both parties revealed the extent and the nature of their respective struggle for Shi'i leadership.

Within the process of elite formation within the established paradigm of state making, there is always implicit the component of political bargaining between the state rulers and the dominant elites. In this respect, the process of state making in post war Lebanon does not represent a rather different version of the story. On the other hand, the way the dominant elites of warlords became integrated into the post-war state is very indicative of certain components of the pre-war Lebanese State that were recycled or rehabilitated. The precedence of political bargaining over political institutions and the fragmentation of communal political leadership, reminiscent of the tribal politics of the Ottoman era, do not indicate a different process of state making per se. Most important though, these components indicate a different historical experience that is reproduced in one way or another and thus paves the way for outcomes that are a lot different from the expected ones.

### ***6.2.3 Shi'i External Affiliations Resumed: Blurring Internal and External Channels of State Authority***

The post-Taif state structure demonstrated the same old domination of external over internal developments. Throughout state reconstruction, Syrian involvement became all the more prominent in shaping internal political developments; Syria did so according to the convenience of its own interests, especially regarding its own dispute with Israel for the Golan Heights, and its wider political position in the Middle Eastern politics. Consequently, under the Taif Accord the Syrian role was given formal recognition in assisting the Lebanese government in restoring its authority; this was supposed to be done with the indefinite stationing of the Syrian army in the Bekaa and other places within Lebanon. The period of Syrian stationing in Lebanon was to be decided between Syria and Lebanon and without the intervention of the 'Troika'. In addition, 'privileged relationships' in all domains were to be established at a later stage between both countries.

At a subsequent stage, Syrian army assisted the government in the demobilisation of the militias. Thanks to the Taif arrangements, the maintenance of Syrian military presence in Lebanon took precedence over both the demilitarisation of the militias and the amendments of the Taif Accord. With the completion of the demilitarisation process, Syrian military presence would be established in the absence of any other military party that might be an obstacle for the Syrian position. In addition, Syria was granted a say in any potential institutional amendment of the accord that might challenge the Syrian interests, as these were voiced in the accord. In addition, a number of treaties between Syria and Lebanon sealed the extent of Syrian involvement within Lebanon.<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, Syria emerged powerful enough to subscribe the course of the military demobilisation of the Shi'i militias. The exception of Hizballah from the process was the result of the Syrian decision to use Hizballah as leverage in the Arab-Israeli negotiations. Consequently, Hizballah's military existence was maintained intact in both the areas bordering the Israeli 'security zone', as well as the Syrian controlled northern Bekaa. This development was made possible through the Syrian involvement voiced via the Syrian Vice-President; that in effect, as long as Israeli occupies southern Lebanon resistance had to carry on.<sup>25</sup>

In essence, Hizballah not only saved its existence as a military organisation but also, throughout the nineties, it became militarily reinforced. Without overlooking the internal structures and developments, the strengthening of Hizballah could not be detached from the regional context; Hizballah's alliance with each of the external actors, active in Lebanon, Iran and Syria, as well as its position within the context of the Syrian-Iranian axis. In the aftermath of the Khomani's death in the early nineties and the rise of the Rafsadjani Camp, the 'Lebanonisation' of Hizballah allowed for its eventual incorporation into the Lebanese Parliament with the Iranian blessing. In addition, the maintenance of excellent relations between the new Iranian ruling bloc and Damascus enabled Hizballah to keep and develop its own connection with both regimes. The alliance with Syria was deemed as profitable for Hizballah, as at the prospect of any future peace settlement favourable to Israel, Syria would

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<sup>24</sup> The first of these treaties was the "Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination", signed between Lebanon and Syria on May 22, 1991. The treaty provisioned for Syrian-Lebanese coordination at the prime ministerial level, in foreign affairs, economic and social policy, defence and security. Another ten treaties in the period 1993-94 extended the domain of Syro-Lebanese cooperation.

<sup>25</sup> See, Theodor Hanf, *Co-existence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, p. 623.



have been in need of allies hostile to Israel.<sup>26</sup> On its part, Syria demanded full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights before withdrawal from Lebanon. Consequently, by linking both these issues and by instrumentalising Hizballah, Syria demonstrated to both the U.S. and Israel that any future settlement between Lebanon and Israel, in advance of an Israeli-Syrian settlement, would not be possible without the Syrian permission. Its involvement in the liberation of the western hostages by Hizballah was clearly used as an indication of the Syrian hold on Lebanon. Moreover, the separate pacts that Jordan and the PLO had signed with Israel delimited the Syrian options for leverage. Thus Syria was even more in need of its Lebanese proxies. In essence, it was the joint co-operation between Syria and Hizballah that determined the course of the anti-Israeli struggle in the south. The Lebanese Army was deployed far behind the territory adjacent to the Israeli front line; succumbing to both Syrian and Hizballah's demands, brought forward supposedly for the sake of the resistance.<sup>27</sup>

At another level, the elections of 1992 clearly indicated the extent of Syrian control over internal political developments; rather than being internally defined, the elections were decided in Damascus, leading the way for another major violation of the Taif Accord. The agreement stated the creation of a constitutional court and the return of all the displaced persons in their original places, before the conduct of the first post-war elections. Also, the agreement provided for a partial withdrawal of the Syrian Army, at the end of a two-year period from the beginning of the Taif process, due in September 1992. As the deadline for the Syrian withdrawal was almost a month ahead, elections were declared at a very short notice. Under these circumstances, elections were the only viable alternative for Syria. A pro-Syrian balance of power would guarantee the Syrian indefinite staying in Lebanon, as well as the continuation of Syrian political control over the Lebanese regime.

Hence, the elections were to be held according to the new electoral law, yet without the formal recognition of its constitutionality. Consequently, as the new electoral law was formulated in close consultation with Syria, the election outcomes were marred by rumours of serious and extended irregularities in their conduct, as well as a low percentage of turn out, the lowest ever. Less concerned with the opposition, the government with the Syrian help focused on the formulation of the lists of 'government candidates' for each constituency. Nabih Birri formed his own list in the south, out of a broad coalition of candidates from his own movement Amal, Hizballah, the Communists, the SNP, some members of old prominent Shi'i and

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<sup>26</sup> See, William Harris, *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions*, p. 303.

<sup>27</sup> See, William Harris, *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions*, p. 311.



Christian families; and most of all, Rafiq Hariri's sister, the latter representing the new wealthy upper class. The opposition list was the one formed by Kamal Assad.<sup>28</sup> Consequently, as Rafiq Hariri became Prime Minister, Nabih Birri took over from Hussein Husseini the position of the Speaker of the Parliament, while Syria was more than pleased with the outcomes. Shortly after the vote of confidence given to the new government, a Syro-Lebanese summit took place in Damascus; in sheer contrast to the formal Taif declaration of a Syrian withdrawal in September 1992, the communiqué that came out of the summit, made no mention to the matter.<sup>29</sup>

In effect, much more than the actual developments themselves, their outcomes signify the reformed dimensions of warfare in forging the internal and external boundaries. In the pre-war period internal decision-making was at best factionalised and consensus a painstaking venture; nonetheless both processes were kept within the context of Lebanon. In the post-Taif Lebanon, it seems that decision-making and a forced 'consensus' are elements determined by the state while this in its turn the state "*performs functions dictated by the 'supra-state.'*"<sup>30</sup> The different paradigm of state formation in Lebanon brought a different version of warfare; thus, warfare in Lebanon demonstrated the predominance of the external over the internal developments. The war produced a rising sense of insecurity amongst the warring factions. During the last stages of war, most of the dominant militias were challenged by rival elites; in effect, their vulnerability and their military exhaustion increased their need for external patronage, so as to regain military strength.

With the incorporation of the former warlords into the state system their former practices, including even greater dependence on external actors, became a part of the system itself.<sup>31</sup> This fact is well demonstrated in the case of the Shi'i parties, Amal and Hizballah and their competition during the elections of 1996; at the first place, Hizballah declared its intention not to run on a joint list with Amal, but after Syrian intervention it changed its strategy. The result was a decrease in the parliamentary seats of Hizballah compared with the seats the party had gained in the previous elections of 1992. Consequently, in a show of its strength in controlling the 'Islamic Resistance', Syria used the intra-communal factionalism to curb Hizballah's representation and to demonstrate to both the U.S. and Israel the extent of its influence.

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<sup>28</sup> See, Theodor Hanf, *Co-existence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, p.630.

<sup>29</sup> See, Theodor Hanf, *Co-existence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, p. 636.

<sup>30</sup> Farid el-Khazen, *The Making and Unmaking of Lebanon's Political Elites From Independence to Taif*, Lebanese Center For Policy Studies: The Beirut Review, no.6, Fall 1993, p. 61.

<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth Picard, *Prospects for Lebanon: The Demobilization of the Lebanese Militias*, p. 46.

This development indicated the fact that Hizballah was a lot less than an autonomous political actor in Lebanon; the course of its resistance against Israel was, to a large extent, defined and when needed contained by the changing tactic and strategic interests of Damascus. On the other hand, despite Amal's strong identification with the state apparatus, the movement faced a challenge from within the Shi'i community itself. The same sort of challenges that together with Birri, both Jumblat and Hariri faced from within their respective communities, revealed another important dimension. That, in effect, the predominance of all the three leaders at the top level of state institutions is a prerogative granted by Syria, and will be maintained as long as it suits Syrian interests.<sup>32</sup>

### ***6.3 Conclusion***

The final chapter of the thesis examined the transitional period from militarisation to civilianisation of post-war state in Lebanon. Through the process of demilitarisation, the state regained its coercive authority. This development allowed the subsequent integration of the former warlords into the post-Taif state structures. In this account, the implementation of the process of demilitarisation did not diverge from the mainstream paradigm. This is because in the established European context the state built its coercive capability through the simultaneous demilitarisation of the alternative poles of power. Along similar lines, the coercive activity of the former militias in Lebanon became *de facto* illegitimate with the rehabilitation of state authority. In addition, within the established historical paradigm state structures were constructed out of a bargaining process of the state rulers with the dominant elites. Similarly, post-war state structures in Lebanon were established out of the bargaining between the state rulers and the elite of warlords.

On the other hand, the transitional stage in Lebanon demonstrated the same old components of continuity with the previous experience of the Ottoman and the Mandate period, as well as the periods of state making and war making in Lebanon. In effect, the new elites that were incorporated in the reconstructed state structure brought with them all the main practices through which they kept their authority throughout the fifteen years of war. Hence, an increasing dependence on external actors and internal fragmentation were brought at the centre of the state. Consequently, the post-war state managed to predominate as the main coercive

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<sup>32</sup> See, Graham Usher, "Why Hizbullah's Wings have been Clipped: Hizbollah, Syria and the Lebanese Elections", p. 35.

agent within society. Nonetheless, it did not build the sufficient 'civil' structures that were supposed to follow demilitarisation. On the contrary, the same sort of indirect channels of authority were constructed between the population and the new elites of the ex warlords.

As the state once more failed to build institutions addressing uniformly all the relevant segments of the population, the new elites from either Amal or Hizballah still maintained their role as distributors of socio-economic rewards to the Shi'i population. Through an extensive network of social services, they went on functioning in similar ways as the *zu'ama* had functioned throughout the past historical contexts. In this way, fragmentation went on defining the prevalent state and communal structures in post-Taif Lebanon. Nevertheless these components were not to suggest a divergent path of state reconstruction in Lebanon vis-à-vis the mainstream paradigm. Rather, political continuity with the past defines both the established and the new historical paradigms. What distinguishes these two paradigms from each other is the different historical experience that paved the way for a different course of demilitarisation and 'civilianisation' in each of the two paradigms.

## 7. Concluding Points

This thesis presented an all-encompassing study of ethnic identity within the pre-state and state contexts. It dealt with the overlapping components of Shi'i identity. It elaborated on the main socio-political circumstances out of which Shi'i religious myths and symbols-Shi'i religious identity-were constructed. Hence, the Shi'ites constructed their myths and symbols so as to articulate the prevailing socio-political position of the community. Once they were constructed, these myths and symbols did not define unilaterally the collective identity of the Shi'ite population of Jabal Amil and Bekaa; rather, these populations adjusted their religious myths and symbols so as to articulate the local historical and socio-political contexts of Jabal Amil and Bekaa. Hence, Shi'i religious myths and symbols were adjusted to local heroes and homelands praised along the Shi'i themes of martyrology. With the establishment of the *millet* system and the network of local notables in Mount Lebanon and the adjacent Shi'i areas of Jabal Amil and Bekaa, the diverse foci of identification of the subject population were sustained. At a subsequent stage, during the period of the increasing European penetration in the Ottoman Empire, significant changes take place in terms of identity formation. With the emergence of new foci of identification (i.e. communal, Arab, etc.), the previous local identities (i.e. family, tribal, etc.) were never uprooted completely. More precisely, the new points of identification became adjusted to the local balance of power. The administrative entity of the *Mutesarrifate*, established after two incidents of warfare in the 1840s and 1860s, eroded the prevalent feudal system by undermining the local centers of power. A new form of aristocracy, sponsored by the Ottomans and the French, rose to communicate between the local population and the central Ottoman authority, whereas sectarian identity was institutionally recognised. The establishment of the French Mandate within the new boundaries of 'Greater Lebanon', at the end of the First World War, brought new elites to power on a sectarian or tribal basis. In fact, the French reproduced the previous Ottoman system of administration and the same logic of both inter- and intra- sectarian balance of power, as well as the overlapping local, sectarian, old and new attachments of the population.

The same logic, more or less, of overlapping loyalties went on affirming themselves throughout the contexts of state construction, state destruction and warfare, as well as state reconstruction in the aftermath of the war. Consequently, the State of Lebanon was built on the previous historical and socio-political experience of the Ottoman and Mandate contexts. The independent state formalised sectarianism, while the elites of the Mandate transferred their

status to the level of the newly established state. These elites, however, were never defined in strictly sectarian terms; rather, inter-sectarian divisions overlapped with intra-sectarian splits, with various families of local notables of the same sectarian community competing with one another. Within this context, the Shi'i populations of Lebanon were socio-economically and politically marginal. On the other hand, this sort of marginality seems to contravene the mainstream theoretical paradigm of state formation and state building, in which the state gradually built its main roles; first, as distributor of socio-economic rewards amongst all the relevant segments of the citizens; and second, as distributor of political rewards with the establishment of unified political institutions in which all the population would participate as citizens. On the contrary, in Lebanon indirect channels of authority, either the local chiefs or the communal leaders turned-into parliamentarians, were the ones to distribute the socio-economic and political rewards to an overwhelmingly impoverished Shi'ite population. These prevalent local and communal structures, as well as the respective attachments that these forged amongst the Shi'ite population were legitimised through the annual commemoration of the Shi'ite ritual of *Ashura*; the ritual was practiced alternatively to the state-sponsored 'national' myths and rituals of the mainstream state paradigm.

After assessing the actual roles of the state in Lebanon through the case of the Shi'ite community, the thesis contextualised on the legitimisation of the state authority that in the mainstream state paradigm was defined in terms of mobilisation of the population -the citizens- around the state and its institutions. Consequently, when the socio-economic and political circumstances became ripe and various processes (change, ideology, new communal leadership and new channels of organisation) intervened to shape the collective Shi'i mobilisation, a new reality became revealed; far from mobilisation of the population around state institutions, the mobilisation of the Shi'ite population around class, ideological and communal movements and leaders revealed the increasingly failed legitimacy of the state. It was the interaction of each of these factors with the diminished state authority that enabled the collective mobilisation of the Shi'ite population and the eventual challenge of the state and the state-sponsored traditional networks of leadership.

Consequently, it was through these processes that the communal organisation assumed legitimacy; with the collapse of the state and the subsequent warfare, the communal organisation turned-into militias rose to monopolise the means of coercion -a role traditionally ascribed to the state itself- inducing new sources of identification for the Shi'ite population of war-torn Lebanon. Hence, through violence these militias established their authority by



establishing internal institutions and alliances with external actors; and they sought to regulate and distribute the socio-economic rewards, gained out of their illicit practices, to the Shi'ite population. As they became the premium authorities within society- a role acquired at the expense of the ailing state- they forged the respective allegiances of the Shi'ite population according to their temporal convenience and the rapidly changing setting of the war. Thus, they acquired the authority of 'mythomoters', reformulating the Shi'ite myths and symbols so as to legitimise their changing course of action throughout the war.

Consequently, the family, class, communal and military organisations in Lebanon functioned quite similarly to what has been perceived to be the 'state' in other contexts. As has been argued throughout the thesis, in other contexts there are other entities (family, class, communal, military organisations) that can perform the main roles, that so far have been labeled as state prerogatives; in effect, authority over the distribution of socio-economic rewards, 'national' institutions and 'national' myths and symbols is not an exclusive state prerogative. Consequently, the existing theoretical distinctions between 'ethnic' and 'national' communities/identities are far from fixed. Similarly to the state-sponsored 'national attachments' that were used to define the citizens of most of the Western European states, the thesis defined a new form of overlapping attachments; family, tribal, communal, class, not necessarily conflicting with each other, but rather, depending on the context, complementing each other and defining the collective identity of an ethnic community. In essence, similarly to the mobilisation of the citizens around state institutions through which, according to the mainstream theoretical paradigm, the state would build its legitimacy, the thesis presents alternative sources of mobilisation and thus legitimacy; a sort of mobilisation induced by, and giving legitimacy to, communal, family, class and military movements/institutions and the myths these represent.

Thus on the one hand, these entities functioned quite similarly to the mainstream theoretical state paradigm. On the other, the thesis argues, in Lebanon there is a sense of continuity through change; even though actors and issues change overtime, there are certain components that went on affirming themselves in different contexts and under different guises; the blurred boundaries between the internal and the external sources of authority (the Ottomans, the French, Europeans, Palestinians, Syrians, etc.), intra-communal fragmentation (between families of local chiefs, or between Amal and Hizballah) and the predominance of indirect channels of leadership (local notables, *za'ims*, class or communal movements and militias) that stood between the population and the central authority (Ottoman, Mandate, state, war-torn

state). These components refer to a different historical paradigm of state formation that brings different inferences of state legitimacy and war making. The same components accounted for a different course of 'civilianisation' and state reconstruction in the aftermath of the war in Lebanon. Consequently, the state reestablished its coercive role through the process of demilitarisation of the former militias. On the other hand, the bargaining of the state with the former warlords incorporated the latter within the main institutions of the rehabilitated state. In effect, the ex-militias turned-into parliamentarians brought to the heart of the state all these practices that sustained their authority throughout the fifteen years of the war; an increasing dependence on external actors and intra-communal fragmentation went on defining the post-war state structure. Added to that, as the state did not proceed to the establishment of sufficient 'civil' institutions that were supposed to complement demilitarisation, the former militias rose to intervene between the state and the population as the main socio-economic and political distributors. Finally, the different historical context of state construction, war making and state reconstruction at the end of the war in Lebanon accounted for the different course that these processes took vis-à-vis the mainstream theoretical paradigm.

### *7.1 Ethnic Identity in Perspective*

Within the general context of the thesis, ethnic identity is presented as a multi-accentual notion, consisting of various components in continuing transformation. These components do not necessarily conflict with one another. Rather, they co-exist and define Shi'i collective identity. Consequently, history as presented in the first part of the thesis is not about tracing the origins of historical events. History and religion as components are socio-political constructs. Within the context presented in the thesis, Shi'i religious identity was constructed out of the particular social and political exigencies of the first Islamic period. The Shi'i religious myths and symbols were formulated so as to give meaning to this prevalent socio-political context and to accommodate the community within it.

Nonetheless, this form of religious identity was not static; rather, it went on reaffirming itself throughout different historical, social and political contexts. Hence, Shi'i religious myths and symbols adjusted their meaning to the various contexts presented in the thesis. Shi'i religious identity did not unilaterally define the collective identity of the Shi'i population in Jabal Amil and the Bekaa. Rather, Shi'i religious identity overlapped with the local identities of the Shi'i

populations in the regions that later became a part of the independent State of Lebanon. These myths and symbols were adapted to the local context of the Shi'i populations of Jabal Amil and the Bekaa, so that Shi'i religious and local allegiances came to constitute Shi'i collective identity. Moreover, within the context of change in the late Ottoman period new foci of identification emerged to define Shi'i collective identity. The new allegiances of the late Ottoman context did not erase the prior religious and local identities. The new identities just complemented the existing identities so that the overlapping between the old and new identities defined Shi'i collective identity.

The later stages of state construction, political mobilisation, state destruction through warfare and state re-construction brought new actors and issues to the forefront. Nevertheless, throughout these contexts, these new channels of authority functioned along similar lines and forged similar points of overlapping loyalties among the Shi'i population. However, the different synthesis of the overlapping identifications changed the form of both the representation and the represented. Thus, communal myths and symbols were adjusted to the different historical, social and political contexts so that they inspired a different meaning for the community.

In effect, what is presented in the thesis is a form of identity expressed in continuity through change. Consequently, the historical part of the thesis does not deal with history per se but most importantly demonstrates the liaison between history and socio-political context. Actually, it is in this historical context that the main argument is defined; that in essence, complementary sources of identification, religious, tribal, family, old and new continue to define the different contexts of state formation, political mobilisation, state destruction and state reconstruction.

## *7.2 Ethnic and National Identities in Perspective*

In the case of the newly emerged states, such as Lebanon, the road to statehood paved the way for major changes to upset what was perceived as the established order. Rather than being the result of internal pressures for the homogenisation of the subject population, meaning a strictly internal venture, the process of state formation in these states was to a great extent forged from 'outside.' Hence, the new and the old historical experience of state formation were different in terms of the historical contexts which defined different relations of power. Hence, in the mainstream paradigm, the leaders of the established European states, in order to

countervail the various challenges to their authority, managed to induce the mobilisation of both populations and resources so as to secure their own survival. The ability of the leaders to build state institutions in order to carry out particular strategies was the sign of their supreme legitimacy. This sort of legitimacy meant that "*people sufficiently dissociated from the old organizational bases of society to see their personal lot depending foremost on the success of the prince's grand scheme.*"<sup>1</sup> To a great extent the established states determined the rules of the game for themselves. They, moreover, evolved on the basis of a more or less direct relationship to power, between the ruler and the ruled.

Lebanon however, came into being within an environment that had already existed within the confines of pre-arranged rules. Furthermore, both the Lebanese State and society were conditioned to function on the basis of different rules. These rules passed through indirect networks of power that had created direct ties with the local population and thus had the power to mobilise; these local networks were recreated within the context of the state. In effect, the Lebanese state structures were built upon the co-existence of various communities and various sources of identification, which existed at a stage prior to that of state formation. Having to rely greatly on the existing resources they had within their native society, and in order to secure their own political survival, the Lebanese state leaders constructed a state structure heavily dependent on these intermediate sources of power. Thus, instead of directing their powers to mobilise the native population towards the legitimation of their rule, these leaders relegated this function, deemed as the ultimate privilege of the European states, to the local strongmen. In effect, these state leaders ruled a social space fragmented into these competing sources of power.

Nevertheless, this division of power had its implications in the form of the attachments it created; while alienating itself from the European experience of a 'strong' state as the main extractor but most importantly distributor of resources to its citizens, the Lebanese State constructed a different form of structure. As the case of the Shi'i community of Lebanon demonstrates, the state became alienated from the established notion of state authority; the latter being based on the practice of policies on an equal basis, incorporating the citizens into the state institutions and thus allowing for the compliance of the population. In the prevalent context of state building, it was all these functions that would give the state the strength to ensure and extend its legitimacy. In Lebanon instead, through the exercise of discriminatory policies, the state provided particular communities with limited access to the social and

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<sup>1</sup> Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State Capabilities in the Third World*, p. 140

political system, while diminishing their status to that of a minority. Moving away from the notion of a 'strong' state as an agent of coercion, what distinguishes the 'strong' from 'weak' states, in effect, is that a 'strong' state "*can furnish its sovereignty with an accepted pattern of shared citizenship thus becoming the organisation that establishes rules and behavior.*"<sup>2</sup>

What becomes evident though, is that the Lebanese State structure failed to alleviate the problems emerging out of rapid socio-political change; this brought the population back to its pre-national attachments, either tribal or communal. Nevertheless, this is not to assert the prevalent stereotypes of state authority in the newly emerged states as substantially discriminatory of particular ethnic communities. In the Western European tradition as well, the state reached the status of directly addressing its citizens, ascribing their rights and in general drawing the state boundaries through, or for the sake of, institutional commonality; and, homogeneity implies, at the same time, exclusion. Hence, by institutionalising commonality as the norm, it seems that state building simultaneously entails the elevation of difference as socio-politically significant.<sup>3</sup>

Consequently, instead of forging the process of homogenisation of its population, the state in Lebanon was built on the various complementary identities of the population, without substantially eroding them. In addition, the relegation of the main state functions to the intermediate channels of local communal leadership elevated the various points of identification of the population to the forefront of socio-economic and political arrangements. What represented the 'national' domain of the state in other contexts, in the new one was represented within the context of the community. Hence, the local communal leaders distributed the resources of the state and it was through the compliance, participation and legitimacy that these leaders extracted from the population that the state affirmed its authority.

The same structure is evident in the domain of myths and symbols; far from forging a sense of shared 'civic religion', the state maintained the authority of these alternative poles of leadership to speak for the divine order. In this way, myths and symbols become the media through which authorities acquire substantial influence and prestige so that "*...they draw boundaries because they have authority, and doing so further confirms their authority, rendering them fundamental mediators of authority, among various poles of power within*

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<sup>2</sup> Bassam Tibi, "The Simultaneity of the Unsimultaneous: Old tribes and Imposed Nation-States in the Modern Middle East", in Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, 1990, p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> See, Katherine Verdery, "Whither 'Nation' and 'Nationalism'?", in Balakrishnan Gopal (ed.), *Mapping the Nation*, London: Verso, 1996, p.231.



society.”<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, ethnic identity becomes powerful and prevalent through the identification of myths and symbols with the accomplishment of political ends. In this way, the myths and symbols serve as substantial channels for the evaluation of the existing social, political and economic arrangements. Hence, identity is recreated by the changing nature of political action, signifying an alternative vision, no less political; and rather dependent on the same pattern of bargaining and interaction, falling into the domain of what is perceived to be national identity.

### ***7.3 Ethnic and National Political Mobilisation Reconsidered***

The case of the Shi'i political mobilisation is indicative of a stage when the state's viability is questioned. It is then that the ethnic community, under the guise of a communal group, is brought to the forefront of political developments, and gradually ascribes to itself all the sorts of solidarities that the state is supposed to ascribe to its citizens. Certainly, this sort of argument could confirm and address a different form of state structure that moves beyond the established theoretical constructs. As is argued throughout the thesis, within the new historical paradigm, rather less than an internal venture, state formation in Lebanon was, to a large extent, determined by internal dynamics that were, first and foremost, forged from 'outside'. Consequently, throughout state building, a different set of entities went on functioning within blurred boundaries between the internal and external domains of authority; this fact enabled an array of lobbying for the attainment of a variety of goals. Hence, in their history as independent states, unable to respond effectively to the challenges coming from their regional and international environments, the newly emerged states proved quite indecisive in drawing boundaries in their relationship with external actors.

Thus, within the prevalent state structure in Lebanon, intervening variables emerged, and instead of forging solidarity between the state and its citizens, they alienated the population from the state; in fact, these variables acted so as to de-legitimise the prevalent state system. Subsequently, these processes brought different versions of mobilisation and citizenship to the fore. Detached from the established notion of the state authority, these attributes became a part of the legitimacy of the communal group rather than the state itself. Within the context of social change, a serious crisis of participation of specific segments of the population placed in doubt

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<sup>4</sup> Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*, p.24.

the legitimacy of state authority as a whole. Modernisation influenced the relationship between state and population; it functioned so as to increase the existing contradictions between the advantaged and the disadvantaged segments of the population. This fact was combined with the state failure to assert its authority and provide protection for all the various segments of the population. Thus, state legitimacy became less credible and more liable to resistance. Socially mobilised sectors of the population came into conflict with the ruling elite, which proved unable or unwilling to provide opportunities for mass political participation.

As the thesis argues, modernisation and state failure to cope with internal and external changes do not unilaterally account for the political mobilisation of ethnic identity. As the case of Shi'i political mobilisation demonstrated, other factors, such as, ideology, communal leadership and communal organisation, intervene to shape in their turn the self-awareness of the excluded ethnic groups of their relationship with the state; it is at this point that the state legitimacy becomes assessed.

As the case of the Shi'i community demonstrates, these excluded groups may identify with new or reformed movements that advocate alternative ideologies because these movements are capable of capitalising upon the change under way, and adapt their ideology so as to give meaning to a strongly- felt discontent. The rise of new groups, advocating radical ideologies, is indicative of new claims for a fundamental transformation of the existing structure of power. The articulation of new ideologies of how the world works signifies "*the emergence of brand-new challengers and the turning of existing contenders.*"<sup>5</sup> Consequently, as the state fails to deal with the discontent of large segments of the population, a counter-mobilisation can take effect. Within the context of this counter-mobilisation, opposition groups, enjoying a high degree of legitimacy and sufficient infrastructural capabilities, as well as societal integration, are able to stimulate and support radical and anti-state action.<sup>6</sup> By the same token, the success of alternative doctrines in mobilising is sought in the failure of the state to meet substantial claims that "*members of the subject population regard as well-established and crucial to their own welfare.*"<sup>7</sup>

With regard to the link between political mobilisation and class one can argue that ethnic identity represents various components and overlapping identities, one amongst which is class

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<sup>5</sup> Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Reading, Mass.: Adison-Wesley, 1978, p. 207.

<sup>6</sup> Jerrold Green, "Countermobilisation as a Revolutionary Form", in *Comparative Politics*, vol.16, January 1984, p.p. 155-169.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, p.p. 204-205.

identity. Both ethnic and class expressions of identity are, in effect, intertwined systems of stratification. In the case of the Shi'ites, it is not that their communal sense of identity disappeared in the face of a predominant class identity. It is that class took over some of the communal components of identity in directing and organising economic and political interaction. Added to this situation, ideology reified and capitalised on the existing class transformations. It was through this ideological mobilisation that Shi'i identity became rationalised and adjusted to a different reality; its social and political components interpreted into a justified premise for inequality for the Shi'i community at large, as one of the most disadvantaged segments of the population.

At a later stage, the emergence of a new form of leadership and the channels it built with the Shi'i community gave a predominance to communal components of identity over those of class. With the construction of a substantial organisational leverage the community rose to defend communal claims and counterclaims. The role of the new leadership was crucial in that it determined the organisational context, within which the identified discontent was effectively expressed. Thus, what accounts for the effective mobilisation, is the organised articulation of subjective communal interests on the basis of collective action. The role of leadership is sought in the creation and extension of institutional support, and the channelling of particular socio-economic demands and grievances into articulated political strategies.

Moreover, the newly emerged Shi'i communal leadership mobilised the community through the construction of a new type of communal discourse. Rather distinct from class discourse, the appeal of this populist discourse is found in the very context of communal myths and symbols, being broader than class.<sup>8</sup> Through the invention of a language borrowed from tradition and its linkage to the present, the leader can effectively approach diverse segments of the community. As the leadership of Musa al-Sadr indicated, the main potential of myths and symbols to mobilise is found in their connection with shared values expressed in collective imagery. In effect, the communal myths and symbols function to intensify the social bonds between the individuals and their respective communities, turning communities into self-assertive entities. Through the invocation of these markers, ethnic leaders could succeed in mobilising the members of the community. Especially in times of great social strain, ethnic communities are

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<sup>8</sup> For an elaborate analysis of religious ideology; the way it functions within the particular Afro-American social and historical context so as to mobilise social support around systems of meaning, closely linked to social and political movements, see, S. Hall, "Religious Ideologies and Social Movements in Jamaica", in Robert Boccock and Kenneth Thompson (eds.), *Religion and Ideology: A Reader*, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1985, p.p. 268- 296.

mobilised, *“when ethnic leaders persuade the bearers and sharers of the ethnic-culture markers to perceive their fate in ethnic, rather than in individual or class, terms and convince them that without ethnic communal solidarity their distinctive customs, and traits are endangered, their personal life-aspirations are jeopardised, and the way the very survival of their group is imperilled.”*<sup>9</sup>

Consequently, the various processes of political mobilisation to which the thesis referred function in close interaction with one another; it is their intermingling that determines the extent of communal awareness. Most importantly though, the coupling of each of these processes with the further de-legitimation of the state authority creates a rationale for effective mobilisation of communal awareness. Hence, socio-economic change, ideological mobilisation, as well as changes in leadership and institutional framework became tangible within the context of the Lebanese State itself and its inability to deal with the increasing internal and external strains. In essence, during the period under study, the political picture taken from the Shi'i community vis-à-vis the Lebanese State is very indicative of an inverted relationship between state and communal legitimacy; thus, as the state authority becomes diminished, the relative legitimacy of the community itself gains an unprecedented strength. It is through this regained strength that the community, at a subsequent stage, emerges to challenge the established legitimacy of the state and the traditional political networks entailed within its structure.

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<sup>9</sup> J. Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics: a Conceptual Framework*, p.p. 27-28.

#### *7.4 A Different Paradigm of War making and State making*

Along the lines of war making and state making within the context of the thesis, a new paradigm is presented; within this new paradigm, war becomes the main agent of 'state unmaking', where the whole state structure disintegrates under the heavy strain of warfare. Instead of forging state structures and institutions, Lebanese warfare eventually led the established state structures and institutions to collapse; the authority vacuum paved the way for the replacement of the state by the authority of the military organisation, which in many ways functioned similarly to the state itself. The collapse of the state apparatus became imminent after nearly two years of fighting when the unifying symbol of the state authority, the army, disintegrated into various dissident groups; hence, the central authority became split into various competing poles of authority.

Within the context of a rising radicalisation of actors and issues, the changing context of warfare from a class struggle to one between faith communities paved the way for the emergence of Amal as a communal organisation, representing the Shi'i community of Lebanon. Through the impact of war, the organisation gained a great deal of strength and legitimacy and it is at that stage that it got actively involved in warfare. Thus, the organisation is elevated to the status of an important agent that monopolises the means of violence; within the context of the continuing warfare, when most of the participants' emotional investment becomes intensified with their experience of violence, it is the logic of power that predominates. Within the European context, warfare gave the state the strength to emerge as the ultimate agent of the means of coercion, through which it sought to enjoy the benefits of power-holding. The same could be true for Amal; the movement rose because of the exigencies of warfare, when this entered the phase of open communal confrontation. With its involvement in open warfare, Amal gained unprecedented strength so as to demand for itself a large part of the power sharing pie. It was at that stage, and by means of a fully-fledged war for predominance, that Amal led a direct confrontation with the Palestinians and the forces of the left. Had it got involved earlier, it would have been questionable whether it would have emerged equally victorious. When the coercive capabilities of the movement increased to the level that it was regarded as the overarching Shi'i authority, it took steps to further legitimise its authority vis-à-vis its rivals. In effect, Amal functioned in the way the established states functioned to the extent that through coercion the latter states became eager to enjoy power and thus, to establish more solidly their predominance vis-à-vis their internal rivals.



The same logic of power is confirmed throughout the process of intra-communal fragmentation with the creation of alternative communal organisations; what is revealed, at that stage, is that far beyond ideologies and programmes, what defines the logic of the organisation is the same logic of struggle for power. Consequently, the potential for conflict within the Shi'i communal organisation was the result of changes in norms and expectations that, in their turn, allowed for subsequent changes in power arrangements. Within the context of these arrangements, the eventual fragmentation of the central authority into competing poles of power led each of these poles, through the control of substantial military force, to use the existing circumstances to its own benefit. Thus an alternative, more or less stable, environment has been created for the effective pursuit of each group's power-seeking strategies. Hence, *"just as the logic of anarchy leads the states to protect themselves in ways that may inadvertently lead to interstate warfare, so too the collapse of domestic authority leads groups within states to take measures to defend themselves that may or may not lead to internal warfare, regardless of whether that was their original intention."*<sup>10</sup>

In addition, state making within the European historical paradigm became synonymous with the extraction of resources for the conduct of war and control over internal rivals; the same more or less logic defined the course of action taken within the context of the militias throughout the war in Lebanon. This is clearly demonstrated in the strategy of both Shi'i organisations, Amal and Hizballah, and their respective alignment to both Syria and Iran; both sought to check and overcome the other, deemed as a competitor, so as to ensure and enjoy the benefits of power. Eventually a whole new reality emerges, in which *"power holders' pursuit of war involves them willy-nilly in the extraction of resources for war-making towards the promotion of their control of their political environment."*<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, the way this logic transformed the nature of warfare is what distinguishes both the new and the established paradigm of war and state formation. In their attempt to gain preponderance and political control, both Shi'i organisations, through the alliances they forged with either Syria or Iran, attempted to extract sufficient resources. Through the provision of support the militias were capable of pursuing their respective goals for political predominance. Thus, they came to openly confront each other and subsequently, to transform the course of warfare itself into a war by proxy. In essence, quite removed from a strictly internal venture,

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<sup>10</sup> David, S.R. "Internal War: Causes and Cures", in *World Politics*, vol. 49, July 1997, pp. 552-76.

<sup>11</sup> Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organised Crime", in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, p. 172.

war and state making becomes attached to the new historical paradigm of state formation, as a substantially external enterprise.

Moreover, the state in Lebanon was forged from outside and at various instances throughout its existence revealed this 'externality'. With the disintegration of the state and warfare, the establishment of a similar anarchical system demonstrates the same 'external' logic, deeply entrenching actors and issues; this logic was transferred to the level of military organisation itself. Ironically enough, military organisations were constructed and functioned along the same lines that the whole Lebanese state system was constructed and functioned for nearly thirty years of existence. Even though warfare in the European paradigm made states by clearly demarcating the boundaries between the internal and external domains of state authority, the Lebanese war served to reproduce the same blurred boundaries between 'internal' and 'external'; thus the same logic through which state formation came about in Lebanon. Nonetheless, the same intertwined logic of war making and state making permeates both paradigms. The only difference between the two is not sought in the actual nature of war making; but most importantly in the different historical experience of state making that each paradigm represents. It is this different historical experience of state building that led to the different course of warfare in each of these paradigms.

As war making gradually wove the internal state structures, in the same ways the exigencies of war making in Lebanon led to the eventual construction of internal institutions within the military organisations. Both Amal and Hizballah drew the boundaries of their 'buffer zones', in the south and the Bekaa respectively, within which their control was exerted. Moreover, in their attempts to extract as many financial resources for the conduct of warfare as possible, they emerged as the main extractors of a great deal of material resources; either by expropriating the state revenues themselves, or by means of extracting huge amounts of financial aid from foreign allies. In addition, they constructed their respective armies, which seemed like regular state-armies to consist of salaried recruits. Hence, the logic of predominance in warfare led both of them to extract the necessary material resources so as to sustain their armies; and what is more, to build institutions that would control and regulate the extraction of the incoming 'revenues'. In essence, they constructed a whole complex of administration, in the same way that the established European states at an earlier stage had dealt with this sort of considerations.

Added to that, they became involved in the distribution of the incoming resources so as to ensure the efficient flow of these revenues; through the establishment of a wide network of public services, they became the main distributors of parts of these resources amongst the

population. In effect, relationships of exchange were established, based on the same state-logic of the bargaining of rewards for compliance. These militias performed the ultimate role of the state as the main distributor of the socio-economic rewards amongst the citizens; and ironically enough, they did that through what seemed to have been 'institutionalised' procedures and organisations.

Later, the exigencies of warfare with the massive Israeli invasion in 1978, the decline of the leftist forces, as well as the disappearance of Musa al-Sadr and the impact of the Iranian revolution reconstructed Shi'i mobilisation around Amal and Hizballah. In the established state paradigm, with the distribution of rewards, the state drew the compliance of its citizens, their mobilisation and support, so much needed for the warfare ventures in which it became involved. In similar ways the Shi'i militias in Lebanon, both Amal and Hizballah, established their 'internal' authority, amongst the relevant segments of the population and drew the latter's compliance with their course of action. Hence, both Shi'i organisations shaped the attachments of their Shi'i members according to the different courses of action they chose to follow throughout the various phases of war.

In this way these military organisations gained the ultimate authority of the state, both as 'institutionalised' entities, and most importantly as 'mythomotuers'. In the same way as the state, at various instances, could mobilise whole populations around the national myths and symbols, this sort of authority over symbols was realised in the case of both Amal and Hizballah. Both these militias built up their authority through the monopolisation of the Shi'i religious myths and symbols. They legitimised their authority through the images they forged amongst the Shi'i population, regarding the main issues and strategies involved in each stage of war. In essence, through the substantial authority they exerted on the interpretation of the Shi'i religious myths and symbols, the military organisations were transformed into 'state-like' agents of authority. The process through which they established this sort of authority is similar to the process through which the state furnished its institutions with the sense of the 'national' civic religion, "*its panoply of heroes, symbols, sacred places (monuments, historical sites), sacred times (holidays, memorial days), and above all, myths.*"<sup>12</sup>

This 'national' civic religion represented the 'founding myths' of the 'nation-state', adjusted to the state's goals, aspirations and strategies throughout the different stages of its development. Contrary to the established perceptions of religiously based politics vis-à-vis the

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<sup>12</sup> Emmanuel Sivan, "The Islamic Resurgence: Civil Society Strikes Back", in Lawrence Kaplan, *Fundamentalism in Comparative Perspective*, p.99.

'well-intentioned civic', state-sponsored nationalism, what is proved throughout the thesis is that culture, and within it religion, can be conceptualised theologically; the latter, in terms of revealing certain 'sacred' truths. They can be analysed sociologically, "*in terms of the social structure and the different types of religious institutions and their social function*";<sup>13</sup> they can also be viewed politically, in terms of political contest "*over the extent of state control-locating the boundaries of legitimate state and non-state activity.*"<sup>14</sup> Consequently, both the cases of state-sponsored and militia-sponsored production and re-production of symbols are deeply political, in the sense that in both cases authority over symbols serves as the means for authority over formal or informal political institutions. Also, both forms of nationalism become intertwined and at times indistinguishable from one another; so much so that the boundaries between both established notions of 'civic' and ethnocultural nationalism become blurred. This is so because, as is argued, civic nationalism could be also codified as cultural since in most cases of civic nationalism, in states like France and, interestingly enough, America, the cultural component of 'nationhood' is extensively projected. Consequently as the argument goes, "*if, culture, is classified with civic nationhood and nationalism, then many nationalising 'civic' nationalisms, more or less suffused with cultural chauvinism, and seeking to reduce or (at the limit) eradicate cultural heterogeneity within a state, although indifferent to ethnicity in the sense of descent as such, are normatively ambiguous at best.*"<sup>15</sup> This point could bring a substantial relevance to the wider perceptions and stereotypes, dividing the world between states or regions based on one or another form of 'legitimate' civic nationalism and others functioning on the basis of an 'illegitimate' form of ethno-cultural nationalism.

<sup>13</sup> S. Hall, "Religious Ideologies and Social Movements in Jamaica", in Bocock Robert and Kenneth Thompson (eds.), *Religion and Ideology: A Reader*, p. 269.

<sup>14</sup> Dale F. Eickelman, "From here to modernity: Ernest Gellner on Nationalism and Islamic Fundamentalism", in John A. Hall, *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 262.

<sup>15</sup> A noteworthy point on the distinction between the civic and ethnocultural perception of nationalism raised by Rogers Brubaker, in "Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism", in John A. Hall, *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, p. 299-300.

### *7.5 Re-construction of State Authority*

Post-war state reconstruction in Lebanon should be treated in close conjunction with the previous experience of state building and warfare. In all the three stages of state construction, state destruction and state reconstruction, there are certain components which are recycled; nevertheless, these do not go unchanged but are adjusted to the particular context of each phase. In the stage of post-war state reconstruction, the thesis used the existing theoretical context, formulated on the premises of the European experience of state formation; with specific focus on the passing from the stage of militarisation to the stage of the civilianisation of the state. The main argument is that what distinguishes both paradigms of state construction is not the actual process itself. Rather, it is the different historical experience of states like Lebanon that determined the different outcomes and the different course that the process of civilianisation took in these states vis-à-vis their European counterparts.

Hence, within the European historical experience, the passing from the militarisation to the civilianisation phase of state formation was not the outcome of an automatic process but occurred gradually with the development of the civil institutions of the state. In addition, as a pre-condition of the process, the European states had achieved a degree of homogenisation in terms of both administrative arrangements and populations. Consequently, there were some pre-requisites that rendered, at a later stage, the process of civilianisation realisable. Moreover, the European states clearly delineated the lines between their internal and external sovereignty. They did so at first by using coercion against both their internal enemies and their subject populations. Within this context, warfare was used mainly for internal purposes and it was on this internal logic of warfare that these states built their internal structures. Only at a later stage, and after they had already established their respective 'nation-states' did the European states embark on warfare ventures outside their own territories; they did so after they had ensured the consent of both the internal elites and the population. In addition, these states, in great measure, created their own elites, in compliance with which the state was formed.

In contrast to this established pattern, Lebanon never existed as a homogenised state but rather as a state in which various loyalties co-existed. On top of that, rather than promoting the homogenisation of these various loyalties, the state institutions in fact incorporated these attachments in a way that affirmed the latter's segregated structure. The state did not erase or dominate over these attachments, but rather it went on functioning on the basis of their co-existence. Moreover, the State of Lebanon was constructed, to a large extent, out of the



coupling of internal but most importantly external factors. It was the change in the external balance of power that paved the way for the subsequent arrangements, according to which the Independent State of Lebanon was created. Furthermore, in the case of Lebanon, the elites that emerged to function within the independent state derived their status out of the French Mandate, as it was during this period that they became formed with the collaboration of the French colonial authorities. These elites became established throughout the state building in Lebanon, as they were the ones to bargain with the French colonial power for the transference of the status of Lebanon from the Mandate to Independence.

Throughout the stage of state building, the Shi'i case demonstrated the fact that much less than forging the 'nation', the state in Lebanon functioned along the lines of various 'nations'; and these in their turn were fragmented along local, tribal and other loyalties. Even though, to a large extent, the various loyalties were internally defined, they acted so as to maintain a fragile state structure. This sort of structure became all the more precarious in the aftermath of overwhelming regional developments. It may not have been a coincidence the fact that throughout the experience of Independent Lebanon, the impact of regional developments was mostly felt at, or brought about periods of internal crises.<sup>16</sup> Eventually, it was at that stage that external processes took over the domestic political scene.

With the eruption of warfare both internal and external components of state legitimacy became very closely intertwined. The case of the Shi'ites in Lebanon demonstrated the same precariousness of state legitimacy at various levels, at the top level of state's institutions and ruling elites, as well as in terms of the state's social control over a fragmented 'civil society'. When warfare erupted, all the various contradictions of both the state and 'civil society' came to the fore and became even more pronounced and divisive. Warfare accelerated the fragmentation of the Lebanese State and society; at a subsequent stage, state legitimacy was rebuilt upon the 'ruins of war'. That is, state reconstruction took place with the implantation into the post-war state of the main attitudes and roles of the opposing warring factions; thus, fragmentation, bargaining and alliances with external actors became a part of the state itself.

In many respects, the restoration of state legitimacy brings many parallels to the initial process of state formation that marked the end of the French Mandate. Even though the actors and the issues involved did change, the same logic still remains. In the final stages of war, it was the changing external political developments that allowed for the restoration of the state.

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<sup>16</sup> On both occasions of the civil wars in 1958 and 1975, both internal and external sources that led to the war were closely interlinked. [Cf.73-75, 99-103].

The exhaustion of the internal combatants could partly account for the passing from the stage of warfare to the subsequent stage of the restored civil order. However, it is highly questionable whether this factor alone could have determined the course of the successive arrangements, had the external political scene remained unchanged. This prospect remains even more removed from reality at a later stage. By the end of the eighties, the negotiations and the new institutional arrangements of the Taif accord were, in fact, overwhelmed by the rapidly changing external developments, combined once more with the internal impasse at the top state level.

The subsequent political balance of the Taif accord re-framed the prior political arrangements of the National Pact. First, co-existence was once more consecrated. Second, the post-Taif political balance was the outcome of political bargaining between the domestic elites, newly emerged throughout the war, and various external lobbies, outstanding amongst which was the Syrian lobby. Third, these new elites became a part of the state itself, enjoying the new power status granted by their new role. In terms of the reconstruction of the 'civil' institutions- a process that was supposed to have accompanied demilitarisation- familiar processes were at work, at least for the most part of the post-Taif state building, during the nineties. In this respect, the raw coercion of the war years became illegitimate with the restoration of the state's coercive authority. Nonetheless, the existing social gaps that at a prior stage had led to the eruption of war were not bridged through the institutional fabric of the state. Persistent economic transgression and uneven regional development that drew an inference to the same pre-war regional and confessional inequalities emerged during the post-Taif period to define the limits of state re-building.

At another level, with the incorporation of the former warlords into the post-Taif political system the rising insecurities of the militants throughout the war period came to be at the heart of the state's political arrangements. The elections of 1992 and the practices of the mainstream Shi'i military organisations turned into political parties demonstrated the same old logic of the pre-war state. Thus, intra-communal fragmentation and the establishment of a new sort of political competition on the basis of extensive networks of services given to potential voters, as well as a rising dependence on external patrons, were ubiquitous components of the post-war state. The linkage of the state authority to the citizens through the intermediate channels of the internal elites was a familiar process of the pre-war state; the same goes as far as the alliance with external actors is concerned. In the latter case, the difference with the past was that, within the context established through war, reliance on external patrons became even more explicit

than before. In fact, external patronage became an indivisible part of the political continuity of the former militant leaders, in their attempt to accommodate themselves within the new reality. Consequently, conditioned to function along the lines of their illicit war practices, the ex-militias, in their attempt to establish their 'legitimate' role within the political system, were even more decisive in using and extending the basis of their newly perceived authority. Through the networks of the public services they took advantage of the state's weaknesses and they relied even more than before on their external allies in order to gain access to the political system and secure a dominant place within it.

Hence, to the extent that the European state structures were forged out of a process of bargaining between the state rulers and the established elites, the post-Taif state in Lebanon revealed no great diversions from the established European pattern. Consequently, the passing to the stage of nationalisation with the creation of the 'national' army led to the incorporation of the various autonomous poles of military power into the institutions of the state. Nevertheless, a closer look at the very nature of the established elites in Lebanon and the way they were incorporated within the rehabilitated state could raise doubts with regard to the seeming similarity of the processes. As the process of state reconstruction demonstrated, the nature of political bargaining in Lebanon was unlike the internal logic of bargaining that most of the times created the internal institutions of the European states. The post-Taif state was reconstructed upon the implicit bargaining between the state and the elite of the former warlords. The sort of practices that these elites brought to the centre of the state could raise questions regarding the whole process of so-called civilianisation; especially, the role of the state as the main agent, creating and extending the 'civil' institutions of society.

Finally, by drawing upon the previous historical experience of Lebanon, what the thesis conclusively demonstrates is that, in fact, the process of state reconstruction in Lebanon was heavily reliant on the previous processes of state formation. These processes were reproduced, in one way or another, throughout war and state reconstruction. In effect, the political bargaining per se is not to suggest an exceptional case of state formation or a diversion from the established order of state formation; this was the path followed by the mainstream European states, in their attempt to forge their respective 'nation-states'. The same argument goes as far as the external logic of warfare and state formation is concerned. Nonetheless, the different course that these processes took within Lebanon refers to the different historical experience of the Lebanese State vis-à-vis its European counterparts.

### *7.6 Prospects for the Shi'i Community in Post-Taif Lebanon*

In the long period covered throughout the thesis, the Shi'i community underwent a series of major changes that in their turn had a significant impact on the existing state structure in Lebanon. The Taif accord paved the way for the establishment of a new role for the Shi'ites at large. The ignored and alienated community of the past was integrated into the post-Taif state system. A growing Shi'i electorate took part in both the parliamentary elections of 1992 and 1996. Almost unanimously the Shi'ites managed to break free from the traditional leadership of the *zu'ama*. The community promoted a new leadership, mostly consisting of the former warlords, coming from both Amal and Hizballah.

This new political elite however, functioned in very similar ways to how the previous elites functioned in pre-war Lebanon. First, the tribal loyalties of the past once more cut across the confessional allegiances of the present. This re-constructed tendency was demonstrated in the municipal elections of May-June 1998.<sup>17</sup> In these elections, the first in thirty-five years, the competition was based on family and clan rather than political lines. A reformed competition amongst different families or amongst members of the same family linked the past practices of the Ottoman, Mandate and Independent Lebanon to the post-war state. This sort of competition was complemented by the intra-communal competition between Amal and Hizballah. Hizballah in particular showed its strength and flexibility as a grass-roots organisation, resorting to tactical alliances with the Prime Minister's 'consensual' list in the Beirut area. Rather than its incorporation into the opposition list, this option ensured a greater opportunity for victory for the party. In the south, Amal and Hizballah submerged themselves into a vicious political struggle for predominance. In the aftermath of the elections, Hizballah won the southern village of Nabatiyya, while Amal won the city of Tyre. In both the south and the Bekaa each of the two Shi'i organisations encroached into the other's turf, being almost equal in strength but with a slight advantage on the part of Amal.

Generally, the Shi'i community found itself in a similar condition as in pre-war Lebanon. Throughout the post-Taif period, both the Shi'i areas of Ba'albek-Hirmil and the south were left in the same underdeveloped condition they were in before the war. A lack of governmental measures for the development of the Shi'i areas defined a population overwhelmingly

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<sup>17</sup> The municipal elections held in May 24 and June 14, were the first since 1963. For more details on these elections, see, Carol Dagher, "Letter From Lebanon: Lebanon Holds First Municipal Elections in 35 Years", in Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, July/August 1998, p.p.55-56.

dependent on agriculture, during a period when the agricultural sector was almost entirely neglected by the state.

What is more striking is the lack of governmental provision for the south in the wake of the Israeli withdrawal, which became complete in May 25, 2001. Almost a year after the Israeli withdrawal, the south still remains a battleground for forces outside the control of the people residing the area. In addition, the landscape is littered with unexploded mines and deserted farms; water, electricity, heating oil and schools are still in shortage while state order is yet to be established.<sup>18</sup> Within such a context, both Amal and Hizballah have emerged as the main distributors of public services; and none of the services provided by these organisations, most importantly Hizballah, have been taken up by the state. For a long period of time since the Israeli withdrawal, the state refrains from any activity that would eventually establish its authority in the area. The state army with sixty five thousand troops sent only a few hundred soldiers in the area, and these remained distant from the border with Israel. In addition, a rather insufficient number of police officers were established in the main towns of the south. Both the official Lebanese military forces and the government still defer to Hizballah.

Moreover, the external sources of state sovereignty attached to the Syrian orbit of power still remains a ubiquitous point. First, the Taif balance of power established a Sunni-Maronite partnership in the state institutions; and this with the Syrian backing and support. Within this context, Shi'i community is still pushed to the sidelines, discriminated against in terms of state distribution of social, economic and political resources. Second, the south still remains a stronghold of Syrian paramilitary forces and their Lebanese proxies. The Israeli withdrawal in fact empowered Syria which went on to control the political scene of Lebanon. The vacuum that emerged in the south enabled Syria to keep its grip in Lebanon through Hizballah. For a considerable period of time, Syria ensured the deployment of neither the Lebanese military forces nor the UN in the Lebanese-Israeli border, as both such deployments would significantly restrict Syrian cross-border activity against Israel. Hence, the area still remains a source of major disruption for either the people inhabiting there or the huge number of refugees yet to return.

The recent parliamentary elections of August-September 2000<sup>19</sup> revealed once more the extent of Syrian involvement in Lebanon. As was the case in both the previous post-Taif

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<sup>18</sup> See, Susan Sachs, "After Israel, Hezbollah and Disarray Rule South Lebanon", New York Times Service, Wednesday, January 10, 2001.

<sup>19</sup> On these elections, see, Khalil Osman, "Hizbullah Moves to Assert its Moral Authority in Post-



parliamentary elections in 1992 and 1996, in the parliamentary elections of August-September 2000 Syria was the one to determine the outcome. Also, Syria engineered the Amal-Hizballah honeymoon and the list the two parties shared. Moreover, Hizballah did not gain any extra parliamentary seats out of the elections. This was the price paid by the party in its attempt to keep its military presence in the south. This was the result of an informal understanding between the party and Syria; in effect, Hizballah could ensure the election of its candidates if it would refrain from a larger proportion of seats. On the one hand, Syria granted Hizballah access in the south; on the other, Damascus was not willing to allow the party to gain uncontrolled power within the domestic political scene.<sup>20</sup>

In terms of intra-communal competition between Amal and Hizballah, the killing of two Hizballahi fighters by Amal, only two weeks after the Israeli withdrawal showed the real dimensions of the intra-communal struggle for predominance in the south between both Amal and Hizballah. Even though Hizballah increased its prestige as a 'liberation force' in the aftermath of the Israeli withdrawal, Amal, as a stable and pragmatic organisation, is not a negligible rival. Overall however, it seems that this internal fragmentation, presented in the case of the post-Taif Shi'i organisations, was the case in the Ottoman, Mandate, independent and warfare Lebanon. Even though actors and issues do change overtime the component of tribal and intra-communal fragmentation is still a persistent factor in Lebanese politics. This was the case in the fragmentation within Hizballah itself, when its former secretary general Sobhi al-Tufaili deserted the movement and announced his own candidates independently of Hizballah in the Ba'albek-Hirmil electoral district, in the parliamentary elections of 2000.<sup>21</sup> Thus it seems that this tendency keeps reproducing itself throughout the different stages of state in Lebanon.

By the end of the Israeli occupation in the south of Lebanon, contrary to the prevalent scenarios the situation in Lebanon continued in accordance with the past. First, the external dimension of Lebanese sovereignty went on to define the post-occupation state of Lebanon. Second, uneven distribution of the socio-economic rewards to the relevant segments of the population, especially the least developed ones is still the case. Third, a fragmented political culture continues to define political competition. In addition, the living conditions for the Shi'i

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Occupation Lebanese Politics", in Crescent International, September 1-15, 2000.

<sup>20</sup> On these developments, see, Michael Young, "Hizballah Outside and In", MERIP Press Information, October 26, 2000.

<sup>21</sup> See, Eyal Zisser, "Hizballah: New Course or Continued Warfare", in Middle East Review of International Affairs, MERIA Journal, vol.4, no.3, September 2000.

community went on being rather precarious. The continuing Syrian military presence in the area ensures the maintenance of low-intensity tension, hindering the return of the refugees, while endangering the lives of the people inhabiting the area. Also, the governmental neglect of the area, especially after more than twenty years of occupation, leaves the population of the south in the same uncertain situation it was in throughout pre-war Lebanon. Within this situation, quite alienated from the state, these populations remain increasingly dependent on the various sectarian and familial organisations for assistance. In conclusion, this has a lot of similarity to the situation of pre-war Shi'i community in Lebanon. It was the increasing socio-economic and political alienation of the community then that paved the way for its radicalisation and its involvement into war. Within the post-Taif period, it seems that the same conditions still exist; judging from the previous experience the explosive potential of these conditions is not a negligible one.

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